

**Monroe Council Minutes
Regular Meeting of Council
February 9, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.
233 South Main Street, Monroe, Ohio**

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Frentzel opened the regular meeting of Council at 6:41 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Council members present: Tom Callahan, Jason Frentzel, Keith Funk, Anna Hale, Todd Hickman, Christina McElfresh, and *Robert Routson.

Mr. Funk moved to excuse Mr. Routson; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

*Due to difficulties with the remote login, Mr. Routson arrived at 7:06 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Funk moved to approve the Public Involvement Committee Minutes of January 21, 2021; Finance Committee Minutes of January 26, 2021; and Council Minutes of January 26, 2021; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Visitors

Chief Buchanan recognized Sergeant Tom Cobaugh's 29 years of dedicated service to the City of Monroe.

Committee Reports

Mayor Frentzel reported that the Finance Committee discussed that moratorium on water shut offs for most of 2020 and so far all of 2021. He referenced the updates that Mr. Brock has provided in his supplemental reports and the rising costs of the delinquent accounts. Some are people that are struggling and some could be people taking advantage of our system. The City does offer payment plan options for individuals that are struggling and Butler County has a program to assist those that are unable to pay their utility bills. Mayor Frentzel noted that there are other municipalities that have lifted the moratorium on shut offs.

Mr. Brock reported that the delinquencies continue to rise and we are now at the point where we will have to initiate assessments. The concern is that some of these accounts are rentals and the property owners will be responsible for the delinquent amounts assessed and one of the accounts is a business.

Mrs. Ervin advised that if residents are struggling to pay their utility bill they can call the City and we can offer payment plans that span a couple of months. Those are on a case-by-case basis because we did find out some have leaks and we take that into consideration. Butler County offers some assistance programs and the City can provide that information as well.

Mayor Frentzel added that if you are on a payment plan we will not shut off your water provided you stay with the payment plan. He sought Council's opinion on water shut offs.

Mr. Funk has been a proponent to not shut off the water as everyone has had to adapt to COVID and some are jobless because of it. He asked that City staff be there and help people the best they can that may include a longer payment plan.

Mrs. Hale is also a proponent to not shutting the water off provided the customers are showing the City they are trying the best they can.

Mrs. McElfresh pointed out we have been dealing with the pandemic for a year now and we need to try to work with people, but it cannot go on indefinitely. Mrs. McElfresh asked how many of the delinquent accounts have reached out to be put on a plan. Her fear is if you are renting and you leave, the landlord is responsible and asked if the landlords are being notified. Mrs. Ervin replied that there are not a tremendous amount of payment plans, but as people reach out we put them on a plan and that has never stopped. Mrs. McElfresh asked if the City could reach out and offer the payment plan. Mrs. Ervin advised that we do not have the staffing capacity to call everyone. Mrs. McElfresh asked what would it take to reach out to these people to let them know a payment plan is an option. Mrs. Ervin replied that it is on the City's website and periodically it appears as a Facebook post.

Mr. Brock asked if a letter could be sent to each of those accounts to encourage people to get on a payment plan in the event Council lifts the moratorium. Mrs. Ervin indicated it could be done and it could be placed on the next utility bill. She explained that the City is required to notify the property owner and the occupant that the water will be shut off.

Mrs. McElfresh would be willing to give the Finance Department a month to notify those that are delinquent to allow them time to get on a payment plan or pay their bill.

Mr. Hickman asked if we could get the notice out if the City has not heard from them by April 15th water shut offs will begin May 1st as opposed to when it is cold out.

Mr. Brock noted that if we had a date certain we could begin to implement that plan.

Mr. Funk moved to stop the moratorium on water shut offs March 15, 2021, and delay actually shutting water off until May 1, 2021; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Old Business

Resolution No. 04-2021. A Resolution adopting the Warren County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation 5 year plan.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the second reading of Resolution No. 04-2021 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 04-2021 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Resolution No. 04-2021; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 05-2021. A Resolution of support for the Great Miami River Trail Feasibility Study.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the second reading of Resolution No. 05-2021 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 05-2021 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Resolution No. 05-2021; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 2021-04. An Ordinance repealing and amending Chapter 284 to comply with the Charter and change the procedures of the Audit Committee to align with the procedures of other boards, commissions, and committees of the City.

Mr. Brock noted that the Audit Committee was more of an autonomous committee formed during fiscal emergency and the legislation allows Council more authority to appoint the members.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the second reading of Ordinance No. 2021-04 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Ordinance No. 2021-04 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2021-04; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

New Business

Emergency Resolution No. 06-2021. A Resolution approving a Then-and-Now Certificate in the amount of \$3,150.00 to Munission and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock stated this is due to shifting from using a credit card because the company started charging a fee.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 06-2021 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Resolution No. 06-2021 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 06-2021; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

Emergency Resolution No. 07-2021. A Resolution approving a Then-and-Now Certificate in the amount of \$3,825.00 to the Center for Local Government and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock stated this necessary as the invoice arrived before a purchase order was opened.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 07-2021 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Resolution No. 07-2021 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 07-2021; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

Emergency Resolution No. 08-2021. A Resolution approving a Then-and-Now Certificate in the amount of \$5,485.00 to ESO Solutions Inc. and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock stated this was another issue where the company began charging a fee for the use of credit cards.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 08-2021 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Resolution No. 08-2021 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 08-2021; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

Emergency Resolution No. 09-2021. A Resolution approving a Then-and-Now Certificate in the amount of \$31,477.21 to Civica North America, Inc. and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock stated this expenditure was approved at the last Council meeting, but the invoice came in prior to the opening of a purchase order.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 09-2021 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Resolution No. 09-2021 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 09-2021; seconded by Mr. Routson. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 10-2021. A Resolution accepting the lowest and/or best bid submitted for the Brittany Heights Curb Inlet Rehabilitation Project and authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement by and between the City of Monroe and W. G. Stang, LLC for said project.

Mr. Brock reported this is for the replacement of various storm basins throughout the Brittany Heights Subdivision and precursor to the concrete assessment program and then the resurfacing. The project was estimated at \$250,000 and the bid came in at \$186,067.00.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Resolution No. 10-2021 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 10-2021 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Resolution No. 10-2021; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 11-2021. A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding by and between the City of Monroe and Performance Food Group related to the 2019 payroll tax hurdles under their Community Reinvestment Area Agreement.

Mr. Brock explained this is related to the Community Reinvestment Area Agreement with Presto Foods and how to handle the hurdles in that agreement. Mrs. Patterson has been working with that company.

Mr. Hickman asked what they might owe for 2020 if they owe \$14,000 to \$15,000 for 2019. Mrs. Patterson's understanding is they will not owe the City anything for 2020 as they met and exceeded the hurdle this year. Mr. Hickman asked what happens if they do not. Mrs. Patterson advised there is a provision that nullifies the agreement and we would go back under the formal terms of the CRA. Mr. Hickman noted that the option of donating towards fireworks was not given to Rivertown.

Mr. Brock stated that this was the consensus of Council to move forward in this manner. Mr. Hickman questioned if the donation for fireworks will be a tax write-off for the company. Mrs. Patterson did not know, but offered to have that discussion with the company if it is a concern.

Mr. Hickman asked how this would be addressed in the future if others want the same thing. Mr. Brock replied that is something to be discussed with Council. He advised there will be an Economic Development Strategic Plan presentation and how we will handle CRAs in the future.

Mrs. McElfresh recalled that they have been a good businesses partner and they miscalculated. Mrs. Patterson confirmed her recollection.

In reference to Mr. Hickman's comment, Mayor Frentzel understood Presto Foods is willing to work with the City and Rivertown was not as cooperative.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Resolution No. 11-2021 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 11-2021 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Resolution No. 11-2021; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: six ayes; one nay (Hickman). Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 2021-05. An Ordinance amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 2020-35, otherwise known as the temporary appropriations ordinance, to meet current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Monroe, during fiscal year ending December 31, 2021.

Mr. Brock stated this amends the appropriations for the catch basin project and the traffic poles, both of which are on the agenda.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Ordinance No. 2021-05 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Ordinance No. 2021-05 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2021-05; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

Consideration of Motion authorizing the expenditure of \$40,094.63 to Kendall Electric for traffic light poles at State Route 63 and American Way in connection with the State Route 63 and Lawton Avenue Project.

Mr. Brock reported this is part of the project to widen State Route 63 between American Way and Lawton Avenue. There is a long lead time for the traffic signal poles to come in and we are requesting Council authorize us to purchase these now and supply those to the contractor for that project.

Mayor Frentzel asked if the existing poles could be reused. Mr. Brock explained that the existing poles are not correct for this span. We will have to assess the poles themselves to see if they could be utilized elsewhere.

Mr. Routson asked if TIF funds were being used and Mr. Brock advised that Ohio Public Works Commission funds from the State of Ohio are being used, as well as Motor Vehicle License and the State Highway Fund. Mr. Morton noted that this will be part of our in-kind funds for the OPWC funds.

Mr. Funk moved to authorize the expenditure of \$40,094.63 to Kendall Electric for traffic light poles at State Route 63 and American Way in connection with the State Route 63 and Lawton Avenue Project; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 2021-06. An Ordinance granting easements to Duke Energy Ohio, Inc. for the underground transmission of natural gas at 6262 Hamilton-Middletown Road.

Mr. Brock reported that Duke is extending the gas main and will connect the two lines and will improve the efficiency of gas delivery in the western area of the City.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Ordinance No. 2021-06 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Ordinance No. 2021-06 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2021-06; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

Consideration of Motion accepting the October 2020 Finance Reports as submitted.

Mr. Funk moved to accept the October 2020 Finance Reports as submitted; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Administrative Reports

Mr. Brock advised that the Ohio Municipal League will be having round table discussions and if anyone is interested in attending and having round table discussions with our representatives please let us know.

Mr. Brock informed Council he was approached to farm the Baker Sports Complex. If Council would like to do this we will seek bids for this. It was the consensus of Council to proceed with the process for farming the property so that it is useful again.

Mrs. Patterson presented an Economic Development Strategic Plan proposal and why they felt it was a good time for the community to take this on.

Over the last five years the City has invested in strategic plans or guiding documents for a lot of different departments. Most recently we had the strategic plan and goals that came out of Council's 2020 retreat. The Parks Master Plan, the Housing Study that rolled into the Development Comprehensive Plan, facility planning in the Public Works and Police

Departments, the Water Master Plan, and the 5 Year Capital Plan that is currently underway. We don't have an Economic Development Strategic Plan.

The second priority in Council's Strategic Plan was Strategic Growth and Development. That was clarified in the document as being inviting for all businesses, but not at the cost of residents; working with businesses to see how we can help them grow; having an intentional approach to that growth; developing an economic development strategy specifically a vision for the interchange and support for local businesses; and citywide fiber-option.

The last Strategic Plan for Economic Development was created in 2004. We have grown and changed over the years, but that plan has not been revisited. The 2004 Strategic Plan for Economic Development was heavily focused on infrastructure and land use classifications. It does not talk about key industries or types of development. There were no strategies, tools, or policies to move projects forward. It truly is infrastructure and land use and that is where it stops. We had a 2008 Development Agreement for Park North. That gave staff direction and policies to execute the vision of City Council at that time. We recognize that is not the direction that people want to continue to go. Regionally, REDI Cincinnati and the Dayton Development Coalition have strategic plans, but those are very high-level and regional. It would make sense to be coordinated with those and be aware of the types of projects they are try to drive to the region. They do not take into consideration what makes Monroe unique.

As we are taking a look in being smart with those decisions and how we can get the most of the limited land we have available and where we want to go next, the Economic Development Strategic Plan would be designed to answer those questions. When we talk about purpose and intent we want something that is very forward thinking and action driven. The idea would be that it would foster accountability and define the City's short-term, mid-term, and long-term economic development priorities. It could be thought of as a two-year, five-year, and ten-year plan and when we look at a project we would determine is this in line with what we are looking for in that short-term, mid-term, and long-term plan. We want to have goals and look at whether we are making progress towards those goals. It would also build upon targeted community direction, economic resilience, and diversity of businesses. When it comes to targeted community direction we have heard loud and clear what the community does not want. What we haven't heard as clearly and what we really need to dive deeper into is what the community wants and if that is possible. If we say we want to develop the Interchange that could be everything from putting a Costco to creating an entertainment type venue similar to Warren County Sports Park, Warren County Tourism, and the Outlet Mall. Those are two very different ways to develop the Interchange.

Looking at economic resilience we look at making sure we are supporting those businesses to helping them grow and remain in place and looking at the diversity of businesses. It is clear the community is heavy on logistics, but what do we need to balance that out in a way that makes the most sense.

Having a newer plan opens up more opportunities for federal funding. We anticipate the plan would break down business retention and business attraction. Business retention is typically 80 percent of what you will see for economic development. In Monroe it has been very different

because we had so much green space for years and much heavier on attraction. That shift is occurring naturally as more and more parcels are developed. We need to go back to business retention and identify at-risk businesses or encourage diversity in businesses and try to keep people here. There is always an attraction element so how do we take a look at what the community wants and identify those opportunities that are consistent with that vision. Also, how do we identify any barriers or deficiencies that are preventing quality economic development.

The Council Strategic Plan specifically called out the Interchange and a downtown/community hub. Just generally in terms of a life cycle there are going to be redevelopment opportunities that are likely in the ten-year plan.

There are some key differences between the Economic Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan focuses on potential land use into the future and looks much further out and is the legal document that drives the land use discussions. It does address some high level economic development; however, it gives guidance and does not go deep enough as to what is best for the community. Similarities are that it is an open, public process, forward looking, and involves many of the same stakeholders. The Comprehensive Plan designates parcels for businesses and the Economic Strategic Plan determines what types of businesses and what is needed to be attractive to those types of businesses.

The proposed timing is to get a request for proposals out in late February and estimate the completion within a year. We would like to look at the \$37,000 remaining in CARES Act funding that was allocated for economic development from the original allocation of \$50,000. Then we received the County money. We would like to also look at the funds that were allocated for the Community Investment Corporation from the Park North Development, which is approximately \$114,000 remaining. Mrs. Patterson believes it makes sense for the CIC to be the steering committee for the Economic Development Strategic Plan and pull down on the \$114,000 to make up the cost. You would see the \$37,000 CARES Act funding first and then the CIC funds. The CIC is the designated economic development agency for the City. We do not believe the Economic Development Strategic Plan would exceed \$75,000.

Mrs. McElfresh stated that this City needs to move forward in a way that makes sense and we are all striving for the same thing for our community. Mrs. Patterson confirmed Mrs. McElfresh's understanding that the dialogue for this would include Council. Mr. Brock noted that Council would have to approve the plan.

Mayor Frentzel agreed with Mrs. McElfresh that it is exciting to see this move forward.

Ed Richter, Reporter for the Journal News, informed Council that this would be his last Monroe Council meeting. Effective February 22nd he will be working out of the Dayton Daily News newsroom and the new Warren County reporter. The Journal News is doing a lot of reorganization. He recognized and complimented the City and the School District on the progress over the years.

Mr. Hickman asked about the plaque for the police facility that Mrs. Wasson sent out and asked if Council would like to go with it. Mr. Hickman asked about the monument and Mayor Frentzel

indicated that the Public Involvement Committee will be discussing that. Mr. Hickman asked about the Rules of Council that contained suggestions by the Clerk of Council and if Council would like to make any changes. Mr. Hickman asked about the land swap. Mr. Brock advised that the deed for that has been recorded in Butler County and in the process of being recorded in Warren County.

Mrs. McElfresh encouraged each Council member look at the Rules of Council and plan on having that discussion at the next Council meeting. Mr. Funk appreciated Mr. Hickman bringing these items up as he did not like when items get brought up and they are not addressed. Mr. Funk advised he did look over the Rules of Council and some do appear they need reworked. He doesn't want to commit his review in two weeks unless someone has something pressing that needs changed this month. Mrs. McElfresh suggested the first Council meeting in March. Mrs. Wasson suggested a deadline of March 4th to get the suggested changes to her for inclusion in the Council packet to be discussed during the meeting of March 9th.

Mrs. McElfresh did not have any issue for the plaque at the new police station. Mr. Routson did not really have an issue with it, but he did put in a request as he was Mayor when all of the contracts were completed and asked if "Former Mayor" could be put on there. He isn't taking anything away from our existing Mayor and Vice Mayor. Mr. Brock advised that plaque is hanging in the new police facility.

Referencing the monument showing the water tower and City Seal, Mrs. McElfresh felt that we did receive better pricing for it. She agreed it needed to be addressed by the Public Involvement Committee.

Mr. Routson has asked the Clerk of Council to put a proclamation of the City dedicating to the passing of Steve Tannreuther's passing and it would be a privilege to him to read it at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Hickman moved to adjourn the regular meeting of Council; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The regular meeting of Council adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela S. Wasson, MMC
Clerk of Council