

Monroe Council Minutes
Regular Meeting of Council
May 11, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.
233 South Main Street, Monroe, Ohio

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Frentzel opened the regular meeting of Council at 6:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

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

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

Approval of the Minutes

Mrs. Hale moved to approve the Council Minutes of April 27, 2021; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Visitors

Jennifer Rogers addressed City Council regarding the ordinance that did not pass to include grass clippings in the roadway. Due to audio issues her comments could not be heard.

Mr. Hickman moved to direct the Clerk of Council to read Ms. Rogers comments into the record; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read the following from Jennifer Rogers into the record:

“I am aware that a few of you do not feel it is necessary to change the language or add grass clippings to the ordinance. What you need to remember is people in this City voted for you to represent them. All of them. And although you have expressed in the last Council meeting you feel that it may be a hassle when a neighbor blows their grass onto the street while mowing and it doesn't blow off and another nosey, picky neighbor calls to report them to be petty, but then a business operation blatantly hires an organization that should know that it is a hazard and repeatedly covers one lane or more of road of grass clippings. How much of a hassle do you feel it will be attending a funeral of a citizen who was out for a Sunday stroll on their motorcycle and slid into your car head on because of this grass?

So if you feel this only affects bikers think again. How would you feel watching the first responders remove the victims from under the front of your car? I am a wife, a mother, a grandmother, and a rider. Which one of you wants to make the call should I go down on grass blown in the road? Which of you would want to make that call to my family? Maybe you would think this would never happen to you, maybe you would like to hear from some of the riders in this room. Maybe you would like to speak with families of riders who will not be here for the next family celebration because of a few words because a few of the elected Councilmen and Councilwomen did not want to add to an ordinance.

I realize there is a state ordinance; however it is vague also. Why can't Monroe, my home of eight years, set an example to add a few words to protect lives.

I'm not sure how much time you have spent on the vinyl siding issue, but the vinyl siding on someone's home is not going to kill someone. And if this Council and other members of our community are concerned of the aesthetics of vinyl siding, the grass blown in the roads certainly gives vibes of an unkept City as well.

While there are other things this Council could dedicate more of their time on to improve this community than a home that replaced faulty siding that a permit from the City at one point in time was issued, I feel the grass clippings in the roadway should be an easy fix to add a few words to the ordinance in question and be done with it. Instead, we all had to take time away from our families to come out here to tell Council members who we elected to do something that is easy and a no brainer.

In closing, I hope you choose to add the grass clippings language to the ordinance and we do not have to escalate this matter. As I am sure most people here would agree to make a trip to Columbus as their ordinance needs updated as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration."

Mrs. McElfresh, Mrs. Hale, and Mr. Hickman agreed with Ms. Rogers.

Mr. Routson noted we have heard the visitor comments and Mr. Brock said that we don't have anyone to enforce it. How much time do we give residents to blow the grass off the street when they are mowing? When our City workers are mowing along the highways there is grass that goes in the roadway. How many parts per million are we talking about? One blade of grass or 5,000 blades of grass. I don't know anybody that mows their front yard that doesn't have grass out in the street. By the time they get done they get their blower out or broom and they get it off of there. Mr. Routson feels this should not be added.

Mr. Callahan agreed with Mr. Routson and noted that it seems part of the City is mowing grass out into the streets. Why can't everyone go out and just talk to their neighbor if they would care to blow their grass out of the street. If you have contractors that are doing this can't you just send them a letter to clean up after themselves. He does want everyone to be safe, but doesn't see any issue with it.

Mayor Frentzel stated that even if we had added grass clippings to the ordinance, Law Director Callahan advised that the current ordinance is vague, but it does have the power to encompass many things.

Mr. Hickman stated that he cuts his grass once or twice a week and he doesn't blow grass in the street.

Ms. Rogers stated that she is not talking about one blade of grass or her neighbors. She is talking about what happened on Todhunter Road and Yankee Road that was a massive amount of grass. She is not going to total her motorcycle on a blade of grass. Ms. Rogers stated that now that the City of Monroe knows about it and if she loses her life due to this, the City is going to pay for it.

Mayor Frentzel was of the opinion if Council chooses to add grass clippings they also need to look at how this would be enforced.

Committee Reports

Reporting on the Public Works Committee, Mr. Callahan reported that he visited the Public Works Building and we need to move forward with some of their needs. They need additional employees as a result of the new subdivisions being constructed. We need to step up on the maintenance program for our City. Mr. Callahan suggested that we should hire three new Operator/Laborer II positions. When they set their budget in June perhaps they can look at hiring three more. We have a salt truck that has holes in it and we should order two new trucks. It will take at least a year to get these trucks. This Department needs to get ahead with what is coming in the future.

Mr. Brock advised that it will be part of the overall budget process as well as the needs of the fire and police departments.

Reporting on the Public Involvement Committee, Mayor Frentzel announced that local girl scouts emailed Council asking if bins could be placed in the City Building to save can tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald House.

As part of the Food Truck Fair on May 20th, it was requested that \$1,000 to pay for a band come out of the Public Involvement Fund. The Public Involvement Committee recommended approval for this.

The Public Involvement Committee recommended approval of \$10,000 for the Fourth of July Fireworks.

The Committee received an updated quote for the monument to be placed on East Avenue where the water tower used to be. That was \$14,155.00.

Mr. Hickman asked about the business that couldn't pay their taxes and was going to pay for the fireworks. Mr. Brock explained that Council will still need to approve the expenditure whether that entire amount comes out of the Public Involvement Committee funds or we use those funds once we receive them. Mr. Hickman asked if those funds would go back to the Public Involvement Committee. Mr. Brock believed there was a certain amount each year for that, but in either case Council needs to approve that amount.

Mr. Callahan asked about the monument and Mayor Frentzel explained that the water tower has been removed and around the time of the Bicentennial, Mr. Routson requested a monument be placed there representing the City Seal that has the water tower and the church steeple on it.

Mayor Frentzel moved to pay out of the Public Involvement Funds \$1,000 for the band during the May 20th Food Truck Fair, \$10,000 for the Fourth of July Fireworks, and \$14,155.00 for the monument; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Mrs. Hale noted that the Food Truck Fair will be from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on May 20th at Monroe Community Park and the Historical Society's Log Cabin will be open during that time.

Mr. Callahan was at the Monroe Community Park and there is an area that would be great for a soccer field. Mr. Hickman noted that he will bring that up at the Park and Recreation Board meeting.

Mayor Frentzel moved to authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with Rozzi Fireworks for the Fourth of July fireworks; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Mayor Frentzel announced that we will have a Memorial Day Ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Park and reminded Council to let Mrs. Wasson know if they will be in attendance to read the roll call of veterans.

Old Business

Ordinance No. 2021-14. An Ordinance supplementing Exhibit “1” of Ordinance No. 2021-03 to establish the unclassified position of Human Resources Manager. (Second Reading)

Mrs. McElfresh moved to consider this the second reading of Ordinance No. 2021-14 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Ordinance No. 2021-14 by title only.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2021-14; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

New Business

Emergency Resolution No. 26-2021. A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Lease Agreement by and between the City of Monroe and Enterprise Fleet Management and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock advised this is for a leased vehicle for the GIS Analyst.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 26-2021 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Resolution No. 26-2021 by title only.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 26-2021; seconded by Mr. Callahan. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Emergency Resolution No. 27-2021. A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract by and between the City of Monroe and BlueScope Construction for the remodeling of the lower level of 233 South Main Street and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock reported this is for the remodel of the former police station at the City Building. The bid came in at \$531,389 and we put \$500,000 of the bond that we passed and we are asking that Council approve the entire amount. We will need Council to adjust the appropriations in the future.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 27-2021 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. 27-2021 by title only.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 27-2021; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 28-2021. A Resolution authorizing a change order to Graybach, LLC in the amount of \$29,912.08 for 601 South Main Street.

Mr. Brock advised this is a change order for the HVAC systems at the new police facility to allow for heat in the front of the building.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to consider this the first reading of Resolution No. 28-2021 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 28-2021 by title only.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to approve the first reading of Resolution No. 28-2021; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 29-2021. A Resolution authorizing membership in the Houston-Galveston Area Cooperative Purchasing Program.

Mr. Brock stated this allows the City to join into a purchase cooperative. Chief Centers advised this allows the Fire Department to purchase the same brand of SCBA's and can share parts if needed with the City of Middletown and Liberty Township.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to consider this the first reading of Resolution No. 29-2021 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 29-2021 by title only.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to approve the first reading of Resolution No. 29-2021; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 30-2021. A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement by and between the City of Monroe and Cintas for the rental of uniforms for the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Brock explained this is for uniforms for the union employees of the Public Works Department with no increase. Mr. Morton added that there was no price increase and they also included the names on the shirts and saved money on the contract for the next five years.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to consider this the first reading of Resolution No. 30-2021 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 30-2021 and have it read by title only.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to approve the first reading of Resolution No. 30-2021; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

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

Mrs. McElfresh asked why we are just now approving December 2020 Finance Reports in May of 2021. Mr. Brock explained it takes much longer to close out the year and took longer because of the CARES Act funding. Mrs. McElfresh would like to make sure she is not looking at six months in arrears and looking at figures in as real time as possible. Mr. Brock replied that is why the five-year forecast is provided quarterly to Council.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to accept the December 2020 Finance Reports as submitted; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Mr. Hickman asked about two residents that put vinyl on their homes and asked if there was anything Council could do for these residents so they don't have to pay \$300 to apply for a variance. He felt it was the City's mistake since both residents contacted the City prior to putting vinyl on their homes.

Law Director Callahan advised that he and Mr. Chesar have been discussing this matter and trying to work through this issue to figure out how to resolve this quickly and correctly.

Mr. Hickman asked for an update on the truck traffic on Todhunter. Law Director Callahan replied that is one of the subjects for executive session this evening.

Mr. Hickman moved to bring back the ordinance regarding grass clippings at the next meeting; seconded by Mrs. Hale.

Discussion.

Mayor Frentzel asked if there is a way we could look into the enforcement portion as well. Law Director Callahan stated that anything that someone places in the roadway that causes a dangerous situation to a pedestrian, vehicle, or animal and the enforcement of the ordinance falls on the administration. If someone gets cited into Mayor's Court under this ordinance we will look at the facts and prosecute as need be.

Voice vote. Motion carried.

Administrative Reports

- Discussion related to the AEP Proposal for a Renewable Energy Aggregation

Mr. Brock brought up the subject of aggregation specifically, for electric cost. He explained that Council would put the options for aggregation on the ballot to opt in or opt out. AEP has approached Mr. Brock on renewable energy that include wind and solar. They would be building those to meet our

energy needs that is available to residents and businesses. This is just the supply of energy and not the distribution. This gives the opportunity to move to a renewable energy source at a lower cost. If Council would like to consider they could have AEP come to a meeting to explain it further. It was the consensus of Council to hear more about this.

- **Executive Session** – to consider confidential information related to the marketing plans, specific business strategy, production techniques, trade secrets, or personal finance statements of an application for economic development assistance; sale of property; and review of negotiations with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to adjourn into executive session to consider confidential information related to the marketing plans, specific business strategy, production techniques, trade secrets, or personal finance statements of an application for economic development assistance, sale of property, review of negotiations with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment; and pending or imminent court action; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Council adjourned into executive session at 7:56 p.m.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to reconvene into regular session; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Council reconvened into regular session at 10:16 p.m.

Adjournment

Mrs. Hale moved to adjourn; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The regular Council meeting adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela S. Wasson, MMC
Clerk of Council