

Monroe Council Minutes
Regular Meeting of Council
May 25, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.
233 South Main Street, Monroe, Ohio

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Roll Call

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

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

*Mrs. Hale arrived at 7:08 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Funk moved to approve the Council Minutes of May 11, 2021; Finance Committee Minutes of April 27, 2021; Public Works Committee Minutes of April 29, 2021; and Public Involvement Committee Minutes of May 5, 2021; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Visitors

Kim Birchfield presented an online petition to City Council which calls for safer flow of traffic on State Route 63. The commercial and non-commercial vehicles on State Route 63 has increased over the last several years. Ms. Birchfield advised that the petition calls for a lower speed limit as we enter the City limits, implementing turn only green lights at the intersection, east and westbound, of Cincinnati-Dayton Road and State Route 63. These turn only green lights would be used in conjunction with flashing prepare to stop lights at the incline and decline of the hill of State Route 63. Furthermore, prepare to stop flashing lights on the stretch of State Route 63 leading up to the intersection of Britton Lane that is a school crossing. We would like the City to consider opening the turn lane on westbound State Route 63 at the New Garver Road intersection to prevent drivers doing a u-turn on State Route 63. Ms. Birchfield believes there are ways to make State Route 63 safer.

Mayor Frentzel noted that Mr. Brock has a presentation on this during Administrative Reports this evening.

Mr. Funk thanked Ms. Birchfield for coming to the Council meeting as it is always nice to see people caring about people.

Mr. Callahan also appreciated her coming in this evening and felt that we should have done something a long time ago.

Paul Lane presented a petition to Council to change the speed limit on Lebanon Street from 35 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour.

Mrs. McElfresh road safety is on the top of everybody's mind right now and asked why that road is 35 miles per hour since it is predominantly residential.

Mr. Brock advised there are quite a few streets in the City that are classified as a collector street that are 35 miles per hour. If Council would like to lower the speed limit it is in Council's purview to analyze those streets for what those conditions are.

Mayor Frentzel asked if there was a requirement that a study be completed on this. Mr. Brock you want to reflect on the liability and you would want to do a study to justify your decision. It is up to Council. Mrs. McElfresh doesn't feel we need a study it just makes good sense to reduce the speed to 25 on Lebanon Street.

Mayor Frentzel asked if legislation would be required to reduce the speed limit.

Mr. Brock advised it would if Council wants to consider the entire road to be reduced or a certain area. Regardless, it is an enforcement issue for our police department.

Mr. Funk asked if the issue was speeding or accidents because he hasn't heard of any incidents on this road. Mr. Lane replied that there are several near misses when you are mowing or backing out of your driveway as most people drive over 35 miles per hour.

Mr. Callahan suggested putting sidewalks on Lebanon Street and lower the speed limit.

Mr. Funk requested that staff gather as much information to support the change should Council determine to make the change in the speed limit.

Mayor Frentzel suggested that Mr. Brock and his staff could review this further and provide a report at the next Council meeting. Council could then make a decision based on that information.

Mrs. McElfresh does not want to spend taxpayer money for a study as it is a residential street and would like to move forward to reduce the speed limit to 25.

Law Director Callahan suggested that legislation be adopted to adjust the speed limit and the whereas clauses should have some basis to reduce the speed limit.

Mayor Frentzel moved to have staff put legislation together as quickly as possible to reduce the speed limit from 35 to 25 miles per hour; seconded by Mr. Callahan. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Margaret Wilkerson represented Fairfield City Schools due to losing a fellow staff member during the May 14th accident at State Route 63 and Cincinnati-Dayton Road. Referring to Ms. Birchfield's comments and petition she supported a change in the traffic flow on State Route 63.

Mayor Frentzel noted that due to circumstances with members of the Charter Review Commission there will not be a presentation this evening. He suggested that Council begin to review the redlined comments that has been provided.

Committee Reports

Mayor Frentzel, as a follow-up to the Public Involvement Committee meeting, thanked Joshua King and everyone that helped out with the Food Truck Fair as he heard a lot of positive comments.

Old Business

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. (Second Reading)

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the second 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.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Resolution No. 28-2021; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

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

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the second 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.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Resolution No. 29-2021; seconded by Mr. Hickman. 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. (Second Reading)

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

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

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Resolution No. 30-2021; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

New Business

Ordinance No. 2021-15. An Ordinance combining the Street Fund and the Motor Vehicle License Tax Fund.

Mr. Brock explained this would combine the Street Fund and the Motor Vehicle License Tax Fund for clear budgeting and the Finance Committee gave a positive recommendation.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Ordinance No. 2021-15 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Ordinance No. 2021-15 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2021-15; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 2021-16. An Ordinance accepting real property containing 1.3427 acres, more or less, from Park 63, Limited, as further described herein to be used for public purposes.

Mr. Brock stated this will accept a piece of property that was offered to the City in the Park 63 Industrial Park. This is a residual piece of property for the developer and, while we do not have an immediate need for it at this time, it could be valuable to assist in the expansion of the properties on either side of it in the future.

In response to Mr. Hickman's inquiry, Mr. Brock explained the intent is if the property on either side could utilize it we could use it as an incentive to promote that expansion. Mr. Hickman asked about the maintenance of the land and Mr. Brock advised the only maintenance is the mowing of the right-of-way, which is about five feet back.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Ordinance No. 2021-16 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Ordinance No. 2021-16 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2021-16; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 2021-17. An Ordinance supplementing Section 412.01(A)(1) of the Codified Ordinances to specifically include grass clippings.

Mr. Funk since it was voted on prior his stance doesn't change as the Law Director has brought up that grass clippings are prosecutable as the law is currently written and didn't feel it was necessary to add additional language.

Mrs. McElfresh does not think it hurts anything to add these two words.

Mr. Callahan did not agree with this and felt it came about because it looks bad on the roads. He has asked his neighbors to blow it back in their yards. We have too much government telling people what to do. He suggested that the police department stop and knock on the door to let people know that they need to clean it up.

Mayor Frentzel has heard from more people that would like to see the additional wording and he did not have any objections to doing so.

Mr. Funk felt that it was an enforcement issue.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Ordinance No. 2021-17 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Ordinance No. 2021-17 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2021-17; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: four ayes; two nays (Funk and Callahan). Motion carried.

Consideration of Motion to authorize the expenditure of \$187,581.00 for a Western Star Single Axle Dump Truck.

Mr. Brock noted that both trucks were included in this year's budget.

Mr. Funk moved to authorize the expenditure of \$187,581.00 for a Western Star Single Axle Dump Truck; seconded by Mr. Callahan. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Consideration of Motion to authorize the expenditure of \$153,605.00 for a Freightliner Dump truck.

Mr. Funk moved to authorize the expenditure of \$153,605.00 for a Freightliner Dump Truck; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Discussion. Traffic control on State Route 63.

Mr. Brock addressed the items contained in the petition presented by Ms. Birchfield.

- To generally lower the speed limit along State Route 63 the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) did not believe it would meet the Ohio Revised Code requirements to reduce the speed limit from 50 miles per hour. We could hire a traffic engineer to complete a speed study for sections of the roadway and ODOT would still need to approve any reduction.

Mr. Callahan asked if the prepare to stop flashing lights could be installed now.

Mr. Funk asked when was the last time if ever have we had a study completed on State Route 63. Mr. Brock did not recall ever having a speed reduction study for State Route 63. Mr. Brock advised that data could be obtained from street light data, but nothing has been done recently.

Mrs. McElfresh and Mayor Frentzel agreed that a study would be needed. Mr. Brock stressed that it is the City's responsibility to make that argument, but it is still ODOT's decision. Mr. Brock added that between Yankee and the bridge is outside of the City where it remains 55 miles per hour.

Mr. Brock will put together cost estimates for the studies and bring back to Council for consideration.

- The State is moving away from the prepare to stop flashing lights because when people see those they tend to speed up. Since beginning to remove these the State has seen a 23% reduction in crashes, 35% reduction in serious crashes, and a 50% reduction in red light

running crashes. They are switching to safer technology that the City already has in place. He can get estimates on the prepare to stop flashing lights for Council.

Mayor Frentzel asked about a continuous flashing light to notify traffic that there is an upcoming intersection.

Mrs. Hale asked if it would be a good idea to have more police visibility on State Route 63 and write more tickets. She suggested forwarding that idea to the Chief of Police.

Mr. Callahan was of the opinion that warning lights are needed before the trucks get to the light.

Mr. Brock will check into the solar powered flashing lights and a cautionary speed limit for the intersections rather than reduce the speed limit.

- Mr. Brock received communication from ODOT that they will be installing signs warning about distracted driving.
- Mr. Brock advised that installing turning only on green at Main and State Route 63 impacts the amount of traffic that is backed up in that area.
- Mr. Brock will work with ODOT for Yankee and State Route 63 even though it is not within the City limits.
- Mr. Brock advised that the turn on New Garver Road was under ODOT's control and it would be counterintuitive to making safety improvements.

Administrative Reports

Mr. Brock sought Council's input on following the mask mandates for staff as well as getting the Monroe Community Room opened back up. Mr. Funk felt it was prudent to follow the mandates of the State. There were no objections to Mr. Brock following the mandates of the State.

Mr. Brock advised that he will be putting information together for Council's review on the debt limitation in relation to the Charter amendments.

Mrs. McElfresh requested an update on the Zechar property. Mr. Brock replied that the City spoke with the property owners as it related to the Comprehensive Plan and that is what Council will consider. Mrs. McElfresh understood that the family is requesting that the back property be rezoned light industrial and the remainder be residential. Mr. Brock advised that the family can request a rezoning of the property from the Planning Commission.

Mr. Callahan did not believe we needed additional subdivisions and did not want to see that or light industrial in that area.

- **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.

Mr. Funk 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; and review of negotiations with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

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

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

Council reconvened into regular session at 8:23 p.m.

Adjournment

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

The Council meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela S. Wasson, MMC
Clerk of Council