

**ASHTABULA CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF ASHTABULA – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
4717 Main Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Monday, June 1st, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

The President of Council called the virtual meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., the Ward 3 Councilor offered the opening prayer and the Clerk of Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Octavia V. Harris (Ward 4 Councilor)
Ms. Jane E. Haines (Ward 5 Councilor)
Mrs. Kym A. Foglio (Ward 1 Councilor)
Mr. Calvin C. Crawford (Ward 2 Councilor)
Ms. Laydean Young (Ward 3 Councilor)
Mr. Michael D. Speelman (Vice President)
Mr. John S. Roskovics (President)

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: None

OFFICER(S) PRESENT: Mr. James M. Timonere (City Manager)
Mr. Michael Franklin (City Solicitor)
Ms. Traci R. Welch (Director of Finance)
Mrs. Stacy H. Senskey (Clerk of Council)

OFFICER(S) ABSENT: None

SUNSHINE LAW: The Clerk of Council certified conformity to the Ohio Sunshine Law.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Due to the current stay-at-home order imposed by Governor DeWine, the Council President announced the Council Rules of Order may be temporarily suspended at any meeting of the City Council. Mrs. Foglio moved; Ms. Haines seconded to suspend the Council Rules of Order for the duration of the meeting. On the roll call: Ms. Harris, Ms. Haines, Mrs. Foglio, Mr. Crawford, Ms. Young, Mr. Speelman (nay), Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED by a 6 to 1 vote.

PRESENTATION:

Health Commissioner of Ashtabula City Health Department, Christine Hill shared current COVID-19 statistics. The State of Ohio has a total of 33,501 confirmed cases, 6,112 hospitalizations and 2,206 deaths. In Ashtabula County, there are 340 confirmed cases, 56 hospitalizations and 35 deaths. In the City of Ashtabula, there are 49 positive cases, five probable cases, 2 current hospitalizations and three deaths. 32 patients were released from isolation when their symptoms resolved. Last week was extremely busy with isolation and quarantine management. The past two weeks they have an increased need for Spanish language translation. A Health Department staff member is able to translate and assist with persons in isolation and quarantine management. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) assets continue to be supplied to first responders and healthcare systems, though there is a shortage of protective gowns. The Nursing Division continues to work with area nursing homes in a supportive role. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is shipping PPE directly to the nursing homes until mid-June. The supply chain of PPE is starting to catch up. Last Tuesday, Governor announced he is forming a new task force called Congregate Care United Response Teams. The teams are comprised of medically trained members of the Ohio National Guard and some Ohio Department of Health staff. The teams will go into nursing homes to begin testing all staff and select residents. The Environmental Health division is diligently working with businesses and Responsible Restart Ohio guidance and subsequent revisions. Every businesses and recreation facilities are transitioning to being open with help from the Environmental Health Division. The school food program is winding down; the summer food program will begin June 15th in order to feed children through the summer. Weddings receptions have limits to 300 people and venues are required to follow the same guidelines as bars and restaurants. Masking remains the most difficult challenge for businesses.

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA

PRESENTATION OF MEETING MINUTES:

The Clerk of Council presented the minutes from the following meeting:

- Correction of May 4, 2020 Regular Council Meeting
- May 18, 2020 Regular Council Meeting

Mr. Roskovics moved; Mrs. Foglio seconded to waive the reading of the minutes. On the roll call: Ms. Harris, Ms. Haines, Mrs. Foglio, Mr. Crawford, Ms. Young, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED. Hearing no corrections, the minutes were approved as presented.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS and COMMUNICATIONS

CITY MANAGER:

The City Manager requested an ordinance for authorization to make application through the Ohio Department of Development Services Agency for allocation grant funds in total of \$150,000 for street improvements, emergency rental/mortgage assistance, and administration

& fair housing funds. Mrs. Foglio moved; Ms. Young seconded to approve the request.

Discussion: Earlier in the day, the City of Ashtabula held a public hearing outlining the uses of the allocation grant. The video is reviewable on the City website and Facebook page. The City Manager explained one of the eligible uses is assisting residents affected by job and income loss due to Covid-19 by subsidizing rent or mortgage payments. This is the first time allocation funds have been used in this manner in the City and an application process will be devised to determine eligibility. Eligible residents' missed payments would be paid directly to the landlord or mortgage company. Funds from the grant will also be used to promote rules and regulations for fair housing as well as covering the costs of administration of the programs. \$100,000.00 is earmarked to partially fund a portion of the Lake Avenue paving project. The application for the grant is due June 17th. On the roll call: Ms. Harris, Ms. Haines, Mrs. Foglio, Mr. Crawford, Ms. Young, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED. This item was added to the meeting's legislative agenda.

The City Manager requested an ordinance to renew health care insurance for city employee through Jefferson Health Plan at an annual base rate increase of 2.70%. The coverage to include health care, dental, vision, and prescription coverage. Funding for this expense will be taken from fund 602. Mrs. Foglio moved; Ms. Haines seconded to approve the request.

Discussion: The City Manager clarified the anticipated expense from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 is \$2.7 million. The City self-insures the usage of the health insurance and pays the monthly premium based on the anticipated yearly amount. Jefferson Health Care allows the City to take a "holiday" from payment at the end of the cycle if the City experiences low health insurance usage. The increase of 2.7% is relatively low and based on the previous cycle's usage. On the roll call: Ms. Harris, Ms. Haines, Mrs. Foglio, Mr. Crawford, Ms. Young, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED.

This is the last week for curbside pick-up of leaf bags until September. Leaf bags can also be placed in front of the transfer station.

Municipalities continue to wait for guidance on when and how the Senate Bill 310, Local Government Fund disbursement can be used. City furloughs and layoffs began May 31st at midnight.

The City Manager prepared a statement as follows:

"What happened to Mr. George Floyd at the hands of a police officer to me, is atrocious. In no way are the actions like this acceptable, warranted, or condoned by myself or, I hope, by any member of our community. I understand that people are angry. I understand that people are scared. And I understand that people are frustrated. I too, share these same feelings with you. Our city is a good example of Small Town, U. S. A. You know the elected officials you see here today, as well as the members of our safety services and we are visible in this community. We are accessible and we want to hear your voices, we want to hear your concerns and we want to, most importantly, hear your solutions. Your voices can and will be heard as they have always been by the leaders of this community. Whether it is through a personal phone call,

running into us downtown, attendance at meetings, or through organized, peaceful gatherings. We encourage this dialog not only with us but with your neighbors and community members. I ask you to please, not view the men and women of our police department in the same vein as the individuals committing these heinous acts. Our officers serve as Resource Officers in our schools, protecting and engaging with the children of our community. Our officers support community events and work hard to keep our streets safe. These actions are not those of our police department nor would these type of instances ever be tolerated. Our officers do not condone these actions and are now worried for their own safety due to the reputé put on this profession by the actions of others. This has become one of the darkest times for our Nation due to the pandemic, and now this unjust action by one who was supposed to serve and protect. It is my hope our city can continue to promote peace, unity, and togetherness rather than violence, vandalism, and destruction of property. We are hurting enough over the events of our Nation and right here in our own community. We want to heal with you, talk with you, and work to continue to better our community with you. I pray for you; I pray for healing in our Country and I pray that justice eventually will be served.”

The City Manager reported he is coordinating with the organizer of an anticipated protest to keep the event peaceful. He encouraged citizens who wish to rightfully express themselves at the protest to do so in a peaceful manner and avoid violence and destruction. He cautioned those seeking to instigate or disrupt the peaceful protest to stay home. He also reminded protest attendees to practice the social distancing policies that remain in place. He asked the community to pray this event results in a shining display of the citizens of the City of Ashtabula. The Ward 5 Councilor voiced her support of the City Manager.

CITY SOLICITOR: The City Solicitor said he is available to answer questions about City of Ashtabula Safety Forces and offered assurance that they do not conduct themselves in the manner exhibited by the Minneapolis law enforcement officer toward Mr. George Floyd.

FINANCE DIRECTOR: The Finance Director announced that citizens can use the drive thru to pay sewer bills and income tax needs as well as payments for other City departments.

CLERK OF COUNCIL: None

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS and COMMUNICATIONS

- **Community Development/ Economic Development/ Parks & Recreation**
Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of each month at 4p
Ms. Haines, Chair said the committee’s next meeting is July 14th, 2020. She wants to make sure local businesses are supported during this time of uncertainty.

- **Finance & Personnel**

Meetings: 2nd Friday of each month at 8a

Mrs. Foglio, Chair wants to have a short Zoom meeting June 12 at 8:00a to discuss moving the meeting date to the third Friday of each month.

- **Public Works/Public Utilities/Cable/Schools**

Meetings: 4th Monday of each month at 5p

Mr. Crawford, Chair wants to meet with the City Manager before deciding to have a meeting on June 22.

- **Safety Forces**

Meetings: 4th Monday of each month at 8a

Mr. Speelman, Chair plans to have a meeting on June 22 at 8a.

LEGISLATION AGENDA

- Formal Legislation Request(s): None
- Form and Correctness
- Legislation Overview –
The Council President provided a brief overview of the Legislation Agenda, consisting of Ordinance No. 2020-48
- Public Discussion (on legislation only) – None
- Request Legislation Presentation by Consent Agenda: None

LEGISLATION READING

The Clerk of Council presented the following legislation:

ORDINANCE NO. 2020-48

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO MAKE APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF OHIO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY FOR ALLOCATION GRANTS OF A TOTAL OF \$150,000 FOR STREET IMPROVEMENTS, EMERGENCY RENTAL/MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE, AND ADMINISTRATION & FAIR HOUSING

Mrs. Foglio moved; Ms. Haines seconded to waive the reading of the legislation. On the roll call: Ms. Harris, Ms. Haines, Mrs. Foglio, Mr. Crawford, Ms. Young, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED.

Mr. Roskovics moved; Mrs. Foglio seconded to waive the Charter requirement of two readings. On the roll call to waive the Charter requirement of two readings: Ms. Harris, Ms. Haines, Mrs. Foglio, Mr. Crawford, Ms. Young, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED.

On the roll call to adopt the legislation: Ms. Harris, Ms. Haines, Mrs. Foglio, Mr. Crawford, Ms. Young, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS

TELL US SOMETHING WE DON'T KNOW

- The Ward 2 Councilor announced the Ashtabula Little League is preparing for the 2020 baseball/softball season and adjusting to the new guidelines put in place for sports leagues. He gave praise to Becker's Restaurant. At a recent dinner out with his family, he noticed their efforts in maintaining required Responsible Restart Ohio practices.
- The Ward 1 Councilor thanked the City Manager for repairing a portion of Bridge Street. She also asked when Council will begin meeting in person. The City Manager said he will reach out to Ms. Hill for more guidance.
- The Ward 4 Councilor provided more details of the peaceful gathering planned for Saturday at Cornelius Park. To her knowledge, there is no march on Bridge Street scheduled. She agreed with the City Manager and added she is not the organizer of the gathering, though she is holding Zoom meetings to promote peace, unity, and community. She scheduled another meeting Thursday June 4th and the organizer of the gathering will be a part of the meeting and she welcomes all to join. She believes this community is strong and believes by banding together, there will be positive outcomes for everyone. The Council President added that some Bridge Street businesses are closing on Saturday for fear of rioters. The City Manager beseeched residents with the reminder "If You See Something, Say Something" and to contact him, the Councilors, or the authorities if anything just doesn't look right or sound right. The City Manager is discussing many options to protect the businesses and residents of the City. The Vice President added that residents should not feel the need to defend businesses or residents by attending the event armed with any sort of weaponry.
- The City Manager responded to some negative posts on Facebook by noting City parks and beaches were never closed to the public from the beginning of this pandemic. The playground equipment and the basketball court on 47th Street were closed as deemed mandatory by the Governor of the State of Ohio. He is mandated by the oath as an elected official to follow those mandates. There will be signs posted on the beach to provide guidelines for responsible congregating in those areas. Lifeguards are being prepared to be in place mid-June. The concessionaire is planning to open at Walnut Beach but is working through details with the City Manager at this time. Bathrooms at the beach remain closed for now. Restrictions will be lifted once he receives word to do so. The virus is still present, and people should remain cautious.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION/COMMENTS (General Matters)

- The Clerk of Council remarked she received many calls and emails regarding concerns for safety during and after the June 6th peaceful gathering and police training. Those concerns were validated and addressed earlier in the meeting. The City Manager will provide updates over the course of the week.
- The clerk read an email from Ms. Lisa Schira. She expressed her concern for the new EPA air permit Petmin USA, Inc. is seeking. She requested the City Councilors hold Petmin USA, Inc. “accountable for including a CO2 Scrubbing Plant as an integral component” in Petmin’s operations. Though this is a subject the City Manager explained in a prior Council meeting. Petmin resubmitted an air permit that still meets tolerable levels set by the EPA, however, the City Manager strongly recommends Petmin constructs a CO2 capture plant on site. He announced Petmin is considering constructing the plant themselves though still seeking a third-party business to construct and run such a plant. Petmin understands the desire of the City Manager and residents wishes to have CO2 capture plant on-site.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before this Council, the President thanked the community for understanding the situation and declared the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: June 15, 2020

ATTESTED BY: John S. Roskovics
John S. Roskovics, President of Council

ATTESTED BY: Stacy H. Senskey
Stacy H. Senskey, Clerk of Council