

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

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Monday, May 4th, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The President of Council called the virtual meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., the Ward 1 Councilor offered the opening prayer and the Clerk of Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Calvin C. Crawford (Ward 2 Councilor)
Ms. Laydean Young (Ward 3 Councilor)
Ms. Octavia V. Harris (Ward 4 Councilor)
Ms. Jane E. Haines (Ward 5 Councilor)
Mrs. Kym A. Foglio (Ward 1 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)
Ms. Traci R. Welch (Director of Finance)
Mr. Michael Franklin (City Solicitor)
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. Ms. Haines moved; Mrs. Foglio seconded to suspend the Council Rules of Order for the duration of the meeting. On the roll call: Mr. Crawford, Ms. Young, Ms. Harris, Ms. Haines, Mrs. Foglio, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED.

PRESENTATION:

Health Commissioner of Ashtabula City Health Department, Christine Hill shared current City Health Department actions regarding the COVID-19 situation. She reported the State of Ohio has a total of 20,474 confirmed cases, 3809 are hospitalized and 1056 have died. In Ashtabula County, there are 149 confirmed cases, 22 are hospitalized and 16 have died. In Ashtabula City,

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there are 26 positive cases, five probable positive cases, three traveling and one patient under investigation, two hospitalized, and one person has died.

The Ohio Department of Health Director, Dr. Amy Acton issued Stay Safe Ohio Orders starting May 1 to May 29. She and Governor DeWine unveiled “Responsible Restart Ohio”. There are five standard protocols for all Ohio businesses:

1. Require face coverings for employees and recommend them for clients/customers at all times.
2. Conduct daily health assessments by employers and employees (self-evaluation) to determine if “fit for duty.”
3. Maintain good hygiene at all times – hand washing, sanitizing and social distancing.
4. Clean and sanitize workplaces throughout workday and at the close of business or between shifts.
5. Limit capacity to meet social distancing guidelines.
 - Establish maximum capacity at 50% of fire code.
 - Use appointment setting where possible to limit congestion.

Dr. Amy Acton’s Stay Safe Ohio Orders outline who is opening and when. On May 1, medical providers, dentists, and hospitals began opening. The Ashtabula City Health Department gets regular reports on the reopening plans for University Hospitals and Cleveland Clinic Hospitals. Starting May 4, manufacturing, distribution, construction, and general offices were allowed to reopen. On May 12, consumer retail services can responsibly restart. The stay at home order is still in effect as much as possible. The City Health Department staff comes to work daily and even weekends to communicate with patients while they are home in quarantine.

The Environmental Health Department is managing the license programs and business restarts. They are allowing marinas to slowly open after submitting a COVID-19 safety plan and an on-site inspection. The safety plan must include closing mass gathering areas, provide for social distancing and show a cleaning and sterilization schedule. Campgrounds remain closed except for permanent residents who paid lot fees for the season. Bars and restaurants may open using drive-thru and carry-out services only.

Questions/comments: The President of Council remarked he is surprised to see people who are not wearing masks. Ms. Hill said the general public is highly encouraged to wear masks when venturing out. The Ward 1 Councilor added inexpensive masks can be made out of an old t-shirt. 211 is gathering mask donations. The Ward 5 Councilor wonders if the masks will be comfortable for 12 hours shifts. Ms. Hill said surgical masks should be for the healthcare industry and the retail masks may not fit everyone the same.

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA

PRESENTATION OF MEETING MINUTES:

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

- April 20, 2020 Regular Council Meeting

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Mr. Roskovics moved; Mrs. Foglio seconded to waive the reading of the minutes. On the roll call: Mr. Crawford, Ms. Young, Ms. Harris, Ms. Haines, Mrs. Foglio, 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 a resolution to approve and ratify the March 23rd Executive Order related to Leave policies during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Mrs. Foglio moved; Mr. Crawford seconded to approve the City Manager's request. On the roll call: Mr. Crawford, Ms. Young, Ms. Harris, Ms. Haines, Mrs. Foglio, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED

The City Manager requested an ordinance to authorize the sale of property located at the corner of Park Avenue and West 44th Street, known as Permanent Parcel 05-210-00-013-00, to Renew Partners LLC with a mailing address of 121 South Street, Chardon, OH 44024 for the purchase price of \$3000.00. Mrs. Foglio moved; Mr. Roskovics seconded to approve the City Manager's request. Discussion: The Vice President asked if this piece of land is by Carlisle's parking lot. The City Manager explained it is the southeast corner lot. It was advertised for five consecutive weeks and Renew Partners LLC was the only bidder. The original asking price was lower, but the City Manager negotiated for the final price of \$3,000.00. On the roll call: Mr. Crawford, Ms. Young, Ms. Harris, Ms. Haines, Mrs. Foglio, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED.

The City Manager is working on the biennial allocation grant and plans to present an ordinance before the Council at the next Regular Council meeting. The grant is for \$150,000.00 and can only be used for certain purposes.

The Sanitation staff is back to a normal schedule of 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Garbage should be out by 6:00 a.m. The recycling bins outside of the gates are not for trash. If they continue to be misused, they will be moved inside the gates and only accessible during the hours the gate is open.

The City Manager briefly reviewed the City finances. Some of the key items:

- The City is projecting lost revenue around \$845,000.00 based on:
 - Income Tax reduction of 15% of uncollected balance
 - Property Tax reduction of 10% of uncollected balance
 - State of Ohio Local Government Fund will be reduced by 15%
 - EMS Income reduced by \$30,000
 - Court revenue reduction of 20%
 - Gas tax reduction of 25%
 - Other miscellaneous reductions
 - Healthy carryover from 2019
- City departments, unions, and employees are cooperating with the Finance Director, who has been diligently working with them to reduce their department's budget in an effort to minimize layoffs. Any cuts must be enacted by June 1.

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Questions/Comments: The City Manager wants to keep a minimum of \$250,000.00 in carry-over into 2021 for the first two weeks of payroll. The Council President asked if reducing hours while allowing staff to keep health insurance was an option. In order for Ashtabula City employees to stay on the City healthcare plan, they must work at least 30 hours per week. The City Manager has been looking at furlough days in combination with some layoffs. The Healthcare account has a healthy balance, enough for the insurance company to allow a "holiday" from payment, saving \$200,000.00. The Council Vice President returned to the subject of the recycling bins. The bins are from the County-wide Recycling Program, but the City managers the yard. He noticed hand-written signs on notebook paper placed on some bins. The City Manager said there should not be temporary signage on the bins. Regarding the budget, the Vice President asked if the City could declare bankruptcy. The City Manager explained if that were to happen, the City would be in "fiscal emergency" and the State Auditors would proceed to supervise City accounts.

FINANCE DIRECTOR:

The Finance Director commended the City Manager for his assistance. She also thanked the department heads and the unions for working together as a team to save City jobs as possible and minimize disruption to public services.

Questions/Comments: The Ward 2 Councilor asked the Finance Director to remind citizens how to pay sewer and trash bills. She advised payments can be mailed or paid online. She wants to minimize the use of cash and suggests using the drop box. Online bill pay is also an option.

CITY SOLICITOR:

The City Solicitor reported his office is back on a normal schedule. The Court is not back to a normal schedule. His department is reviewing their budget for the requested reductions.

CLERK OF COUNCIL:

The Clerk of Council spoke about changes to the 2020 Census timeline for reporting. The deadline is now October 31st, though you should fill it out as soon as possible. Current response rates can be found online. As of May 4, response rates are Ohio 61.7%, Ashtabula County 54.9%, City of Ashtabula 53.1%. She encouraged the Councilors to have Zoom meeting for citizens of their Ward and can help facilitate them if needed.

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. 2020-42.
- Public Discussion (on legislation only) – None

LEGISLATION READING

The Clerk of Council presented the following legislation:

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-42 A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND RATIFYING THE CITY MANAGER'S MARCH 23 EXECUTIVE ORDER RELATED TO ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE POLICIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (City Manager)

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

NEW BUSINESS

TELL US SOMETHING WE DON'T KNOW

The Council President shared he noticed sanitation department staff operating the security camera in front of the recycle bins. He wants everyone to know the cameras are real and hope that will be effective in dissuading people from bringing unwanted refuse there. He also announced a new bakery opened on Main Avenue called Bakery on Main. The Vice President touted owner Stacy Stevenson as a fantastic baker.

The Ward 4 Councilor shared information about pandemic unemployment benefits. This is in place for people turned down for the standard unemployment benefits. A broad list of who qualifies is available through <https://unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/>.

The Ward 5 Councilor asked the City Manager to explain the Northshore Bike Trail. The Ashtabula County Metroparks has advertised for bidders. A portion of the trail will be on West Avenue. The North Shore Bike Trail has been discussed for 15 years, and the last two years in public hearings with the current route. The Council Vice President reminds motorists to allow three feet leeway to cyclists on the road.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION/COMMENTS (General Matters)

The Clerk of Council presented emails and phone calls from the public.

Mr. Pete Bean asked if the City Manager is aware of any development happening at the old Sardi's building and Shea's Theater. The City Manager has seen activity at Sardi's but is not sure what is happening. The owner of Shea's is making some slow progress there.

Mr. Jim Tadsen commented about the recycle bin situation that was addressed earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Stephen Kellat provided comments of support and prayer for the City Manager and Council amidst the crisis.

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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 8:01 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: June 1, 2020

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

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