

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Riverside City Council Meeting

Held on Thursday, November 16, 2023

Riverside, OH

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Williams called the Riverside, Ohio, City Council Meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. at the Riverside Administrative Offices, 5200 Springfield Street, Suite 100, Riverside, Ohio, 45431.

ROLL CALL: Council attendance was as follows: Mr. Denning, present; Mrs. Franklin, present; Ms. Fry, present; Mr. Joseph, present; Ms. Lommatzsch, present; Mr. Maxfield, absent; and Mayor Williams, present.

Staff present were as follows: Josh Rauch, City Manager; and Katie Lewallen, Communications Manager/Clerk of Council.

EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS: Mr. Denning moved, seconded by Mr. Joseph, to excuse Mr. Maxfield. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA: There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Deputy Mayor Lommatzsch moved, seconded by Mr. Denning, to approve the agenda. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MOMENT OF SILENCE: Mayor Williams led the pledge of allegiance.

SWEAR-IN: Mayor Williams gave the oath of office to Officer Brett Waler.

MINUTES: Mr. Denning moved, seconded by Mrs. Franklin, to approve the November 2, 2023, council business meeting minutes. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

WRITTEN CITIZEN PETITIONS: Mayor Williams stated that anyone wishing to speak should fill out a form located in the back of the room, fill it out, and hand it to the clerk.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Fire Department – Chief Miller stated they have completed all staff interviews, and as actionable items arise they have been able to implement them. The bid opening for the exhaust systems for the fire stations will happen next week. They received a 90/10 grant for that purchase. As part of a BWC grant, they have purchased an electric stair chair, which will allow them to ascend and descend steps with the push of a button. Their first leased vehicle is currently being up-fitted and should be on the road by the end of the month.

Public Service Department – Ms. Bartlett stated that three people were interviewed for the second foreman position that has been created. Brian Hawkey, who has 30 years of service with the city was selected to fill that role. No bids were received for outsourcing for snow plowing. They have had contact with the City of Centerville for a possible

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mutual aid contract. She stated there will be more lane reductions on Route 35 for Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday from 8 pm – 6 am. This week the crews installed 16 new ‘no parking’ signs on the east side of Orinoco. This was due to a complaint by Republic Services as they were unable to make it down the street and trash was not being picked up. It also causes problems for emergency vehicles and snowplows. Mr. Rauch added that four new staff members have been hired in the service department and not all of them come with the same level of experience with respect to snowplowing. Not all of them have CDLs; over the next weeks and months, they will be getting them up to speed with learning how to run a snowplow, particularly along major arterials and thoroughfares, which is what they pay the most attention to during the snow season. He stated he would bring a resolution in December to have mutual aid agreements as many cities have them. It is not meant to be for plowing as when there is snow, all city personnel will be busy in their city; it is more for when a vehicle is down or if a specific need has to be done for a short time. He added that staffing is an issue in the region for public works and public service. This job is in high demand, but there aren’t a lot of people for that. Deputy Mayor Lommatzsch added that as they get into the snow season should other trucks with different names be assisting, it can be put out that they are working with neighboring communities. Mr. Rauch stated that should they get to that point; he, Ms. Bartlett, and Ms. Lewallen would get ahead of trying to get the information to the public.

City Manager Report – Mr. Rauch stated that next week city offices would be closed on Thursday, November 23 and 24, 2023, in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: No one wished to speak on an agenda item.

NEW BUSINESS

A. RESOLUTIONS

- I) **Resolution No. 23-R-2894** – A resolution declaring certain property owned by the City to be surplus and no longer needed for city purposes and authorizing its disposition.

Mr. Denning moved, seconded by Mrs. Franklin, to approve Resolution No. 23-R-2894.

All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

- II) **Resolution No. 23-R-2895** – A resolution authorizing the city manager to enter into a renewal agreement with Colliers International for professional services as the commercial listing agent for the Wright Point Office Park, 5100 and 5200 Springfield Street, Riverside, Ohio.

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Mr. Denning moved, seconded by Mrs. Franklin, to approve Resolution No. 23-R-2895.

All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: A petition had been received, but when called no one came forward to speak.

DISCUSSION ITEM - BUDGET 2024: Mr. Rauch stated they recently spoke on the operating budget, and now he would like to review the capital portion of the budget. He stated the more they work the budget and start to touch portions of the budget it affects things in other parts of the budget. The problems they face are significant but are surmountable. They can attack the problems and solve them by taking just pieces one thing at a time. He quickly reviewed the operating budget stating that the general fund transfers monies to fire, police, service, and Wright Point funds in order to keep funds solvent throughout the year. They anticipate running a structural deficit in the general fund. They will have to spend some reserves in order to make this happen next year. In order to reduce that deficit, they need to resolve the situation with Wright Point, going forward on the stormwater utility fee creating more revenue for public service, focus on public safety funding - particularly the police levy, and reevaluate how they are taking the monies that are being used for capital costs and allocating those funds in future years. The practice has been to take a lot of motor vehicle taxes, gas taxes, and permissive taxes and to allocate those monies to infrastructure. They will evaluate whether there are opportunities to divert more of those funds to the operating budget to help reduce the stress on that side of the budget, but this will be a process of trying to analyze and work through.

Mr. Rauch stated there are five projects they are committed to in 2024, one in 2025, and one in 2026. He presented their approach to budgeting for these projects. He stated that the 2025 project, Woodman Phase I, is estimated at \$6.4 million with almost \$500,000 for construction inspection costs. Estimates and bids are often very different amounts, so a 25 percent inflation factor has been added in. This makes the total estimated cost of the project nearly \$8.7 million for this project. Ms. Bartlett and her staff have been able to identify and marshal grants to offset some of the costs totaling \$6.3 million. That means the city needs to cover potentially \$2.3 million. They have taken the same approach to the other projects: estimate + additional costs the city may pay, then inflate it – grants, and that is the out-of-pocket total. He presented the five projects for 2024 that included one-time costs and loans. He explained that OPWC loans are attractive as they are often at zero percent interest over a 20-year payment. He stated in 2024, they have already committed to \$1.1 million in capital expenses. By the end of 2025, they need to have \$3.6 million in order to proceed with the capital improvement plan as that is the major hit for Woodman Phase I. He stated he was showing the expense side of the equation as based on the revenues that come in from state highway progressive tax and the motor vehicle and gas taxes, they have to find a way to bridge

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the \$3.6 million hole over the next 18 months in order to make good on what they planned. He stated that they have a few funds they can marshal to reach the needed \$3.6 million: 2237 – Local Fiscal Recovery (ARP) Fund, 2205 – State Highway Fund, 2209 – Permissive Tax Fund, and 2202 – Service Fund. They will be deactivating the Capital Improvement Fund as per the recommendation of the auditor and rolling everything into the Service Fund. He reviewed each of the funds and the uses of the money from each fund for next year. All ARP money needs to be obligated by the end of next year or else they have to return some of the funds. The ARP money will be able to cover three projects next year: Spinning Road Phase 2, Olentangy Bridge, and Harshman/Beatrice/Valley. This fund will end with a zero balance. The State Highway Fund requires that at least 7.5 percent of the motor vehicle and gas tax be allocated to this fund, and it can only be spent on state highways. In 2024, the Urban Paving Program involves state highways. They will have approximately \$737,000 in that fund next year and be able to pay for the Urban Paving Program repaving and ramps, and traffic signal and highway maintenance/supplies. This will end the year with a balance of approximately \$157,500. This balance cannot be used on the Woodman Drive project as that is not a state highway. The Permissive Tax Fund is projected to have \$790,000 at the beginning of 2024. The approach is to use this fund to pay for the OPWC loans. The loans that will be paid total \$93,400 leaving an end-of-year balance of \$696,000. This balance can be applied to the Woodman Phase I balance, but they have to save it. By following this plan, thus far, all the budgeted capital projects for 2024 will be paid for, approximately \$696,000 will be saved to put towards Woodman Phase I, and they still need to find \$1.65 million for the remaining Woodman Phase I balance. This brings them to the Service Fund. It is believed there will be \$500,000 in that fund at the end of 2023. A balance transfer from the Capital Improvement Fund to close that account to the Service Fund will be \$730,000. Any gas tax and motor vehicle tax will go into the Service Fund estimated at \$758,000. This gives a balance of \$1.9 million for the Service Fund that can be used to offset costs for the Woodman Phase I project. If they adopt this plan, they are likely to meet their goal of paying for Woodman Phase I out-of-pocket. This means they are committing to this plan for two years as this doesn't kick off until 2025. Discussion was held on Woodman Phase 2 and Phase 3, and the future improvements to Riverside were discussed. He stated the goal is to take this approach and strategy and incorporate it into the budget ordinance. The budget ordinance is the start of the process; they start a budget ordinance to get going into next year and spend next year plugging the holes and improving their process.

Discussion was held on the reserve fund balance policy. Mr. Rauch stated he believed the policy only addresses the General Fund and not a reserve in each individual fund. He will double-check on that. He will have that to them before the December 7, 2023, meeting.

Deputy Mayor Lommatzsch asked if they would be having a work session on December 14, 2023, as the Chamber is having its annual Christmas event as the council is invited to

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that. Mr. Rauch stated he had some things penciled in, but they could move them. He reviewed the ordinances that would be coming to them in December.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS: Mr. Denning stated it has been great having Mrs. Franklin on council, and he understands she is moving on. He has appreciated her opinion even when they didn't see eye-to-eye. He thanked the fire department for getting Santa to the Hometown Holiday. He thanked all those who attended and made it a success. The tree is beautiful and is in a place where everyone can see it. He thanked the Chamber for their contribution as well. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Ms. Fry stated to Mrs. Frankling that people who know them through council meetings have seen that they have a lot of different opinions, especially in verbal sparring in the early days, but a lot of people don't know that they are good friends. She has appreciated her authenticity and honesty as it has been a treasure to her. She will be missed.

Mrs. Lommatzsch echoed the comments. She stated to Mrs. Franklin that they are very different in a lot of ways. She has brought a lot of different thoughts to the group over the last four years, and they probably needed it. She wished her luck in her new endeavors; Wisconsin is lucky to get her. She asked the council to remember the Chamber event on December 14 and to put it on their calendar. She thanked the many organizations in the city for their participation at Hometown Holiday as no one was sure the change of venue would work, but she thinks it has been a positive as the turnout was amazing. She thanked the Jaycees and the Chamber for making it happen.

Mayor Williams shared the thanks with the organizations that made Hometown Holiday a success. He stated at the December 7, 2023, council meeting they will be honoring former councilwoman Shirley Reynolds, who was a long-time community advocate. She had recently passed away, and her family has been invited to the meeting to receive the honor council will bestow. He stated that he and Mrs. Franklin started together four years ago. He added that Mrs. Franklin has provided a tremendous sounding board and balance for him. She has been honest with him about how he is at meetings. He took it to heart when he was running for office that the people he interacted with who had met her shared that they answered questions similarly even though they did not know one another. By charter, they are all non-partisan, so they can't say they vote for a Democrat, a Republican, or whoever. Decisions made by party lines have little to do with the city. He found when he shared this answer that others indicated she said the same thing. He knows that the decisions she made and the principles she made decisions with were always governed by what she thought was best, not by a party. It was what she thought was best for the 25,000 residents of the city. He stated that while he talks a lot; April certainly says a lot. It is the approach she brought to her position. She has put in a lot of work with rewriting the council procedure and handbook to try to make them better at

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what they do. He stated she would be missed, and their loss is another community's gain. He stated that she is just a doer, and they need more doers.

Mr. Joseph stated that he appreciated the level of patience Mrs. Franklin has bestowed on him many times. He stated that she had many things she could be doing in her life, but that she committed herself to being there three Thursdays a month because she thought so much of the community, and she wanted to make a difference. She didn't do this for the money or for notoriety as none of them do; she serves on council as a selfless service. He stated that she has a level of care and compassion that comes naturally to her. He will always keep the lessons learned from her in the back of his head. He wished her good luck and stated she would be missed.

Mrs. Franklin stated that by doing this for the last four years, she has grown and learned so much. It is so important to go out and to read everything else that you can. Some things they'll agree with some things they won't, but she thinks that the more knowledge a person is about city government and state government that person will start to understand better how the process works and know that process is really what helps make these decisions. She stated it is easy to say yes or no in a vote, but a person could be saying yes or no and not even understand it. One thing she did when coming on council was make the effort to learn. She has learned a lot and has learned a lot through council members. Patience is probably the one thing she has learned the most from Brenda. She knows she is outspoken and has always tried to be as prepared as possible when she speaks. She said what she needed to say to make her point. She added that most of all, she will miss all of them. It has been a great job with the people she has been able to meet.

Mr. Rauch stated as a first-time manager he could not have asked for a better council person to give the kudos when it was needed and to man up when it was needed. He thanked her for being those winds of encouragement and for being an ear as much as being an oracle of advice. He has appreciated her.

Ms. Lewallen stated she would miss her.

ADJOURNMENT: Deputy Mayor Lommatzsch moved, seconded by Mrs. Franklin, to adjourn; council adjourned at 7:01 p.m.



Pete Williams, Mayor



Clerk of Council