

Video Conference
Regular Meeting
February 22, 2021
7:00 p.m.

Council met via video conference in regular session with all of the nine members present: Phillips, Payne, Nickerson, Tatman, Lewis, Gillum, Shoemaker, Corcoran and Proehl. Also, in attendance were Mayor Feeney, City Auditor Spetnagel and Law Director Villarreal. This meeting was video conferenced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and followed the guidelines of the Ohio Attorney General, Dave Yost, allowing the public to listen to the meeting safely.

Mr. Phillips moved and Ms. Nickerson seconded that the minutes of the regular meeting of February 8, 2021 be accepted and approved, as submitted by the Clerk. All members present voted “yea”, and President Arnold declared the motion adopted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Parks & Recreation Committee:

Ms. Corcoran reported that the Parks & Recreation Committee had one item on the agenda, Item #6, a Resolution for supporting the Ross County Park District in going after a grant through the State of Ohio to extend the bike path with the Coppel Trail Extension Project. Ms. Corcoran said that at the appropriate time she will ask to waive the three-read rule.

Safety Service Committee:

Ms. Gillum stated that the Safety Service Committee did not have any items on the agenda, but that she has been gathering information for the livestock within the City limits legislation. Ms. Gillum said that she has decided to host another committee meeting on 03/15/2021 to discuss this further. She would like to consolidate some of the information she has found and make it a little easier for people to understand and get a better guideline as to what she is foreseeing with this legislation. She said she would also like to speak with City officials to make sure it is something that can be monitored correctly and fairly.

Human Resources Committee:

Ms. Payne stated that the Human Resources Committee did not have any items on the agenda but that they did have a committee meeting earlier on assignment #19-127, which is to update the City’s Ordinance to allow elected officials to be granted the same 457 Plan-matching benefits that are permitted to City employees. She said that the committee plans to move forward with that.

Development Committee:

Ms. Nickerson stated that the Development Committee did not have any items on the agenda and that she did not have anything to report at this time.

Community Affairs Committee:

Mr. Phillips stated that the Community Affairs Committee had one item on the agenda, Item #2, which is an Ordinance supporting a Community Yard Sale to be held the weekend of Friday, June 4, 2021 through Sunday, June 6, 2021 and waiving the yard sale permit fee of five dollars for that weekend. Mr. Phillips said that he would just let that go on to the second reading at this time due to the dates requested and that he has not been asked to expedite it.

Finance / Technology Committee:

Mr. Proehl reported the Finance Committee had one item on the agenda, Item #4, which is the first reading of an Ordinance accepting insurance reimbursement funds in the amount of \$12,370.00, re-appropriating \$14,870.00 for the total cost of replacement and repair of a traffic signal control panel and declaring an emergency. Mr. Proehl said so that this can be handled, at the appropriate time he will ask to waive the three-read rule.

City Services / Transit Committee:

Ms. Lewis reported that the City Services Committee had one item on the agenda, Item #1, which is a first reading of an Ordinance authorizing the City to participate in the Ohio Department of Transportation Cooperative Purchasing Program for road salt. She said that at the appropriate time she will ask to waive the three-read rule. Ms. Lewis stated that City Services had a committee meeting prior to the Council meeting discussing two items that they will be moving forward with. One is in regards to entering into a preliminary contract with SHARE Mobility to help improve the scheduling and routing platform to improve data collection and increase efficiency. Also discussed was legislation authorizing the Mayor to apply for ODOT grants.

Engineering Committee:

Mr. Shoemaker stated that the Engineering Committee had two items on the agenda, Item #3, first reading of an Ordinance re-appropriating \$8,000.00 for use toward the purchase of decorative sleeves and other necessary items for updating parking meters and declaring an emergency. He said at the appropriate time he will be asking Council to waive the three-read rule. Also, Item #5, which is the first reading of a Resolution authorizing the City of Chillicothe, hereinafter referred to as the Local Public Agency (LPA), to prepare and execute an application for the Safe Routes to School Project and declaring an emergency. Mr. Shoemaker stated that again at the appropriate time he will ask to waive the three-read rule on this item as well.

Utilities Committee:

Mr. Tatman reported that the Utilities Committee did not have any items on the agenda. He said that we made it through a rough week with snow and ice; he is putting the white flag out, and hopefully we won't get any more weather. He added that now we can wait for pothole season, because he is sure they are coming.

REPORTS OF OFFICIALS

Report of Mayor Feeney:

Mayor Feeney stated that he would start by reviewing tonight's agenda. He said that Item #1 is topical for Council tonight and is how we get our salt, which is through a Cooperative Purchasing Program through the State of Ohio, and we need authorization to enter into that agreement. He added that we have already purchased and used 5 or 6 times as much salt as we did in the entire calendar year of 2020, and he would ask for support on this item. Mayor Feeney agreed with Councilman Phillips on the sentiment of Item #2 and that with reviewing current health orders and then trying to project what our situation will be like in June is difficult. He said that he thinks that the parameters of our Community Yard Sale would fit into what are the acceptable guidelines right now, and we can always hold off on the third read if there are any questions. Mayor Feeney said he would support the passage of Item #3 for the decorative sleeves so we can get those installed and the parking meters going, and he had the same support for Item #4.

Mayor Feeney said he would touch on Item #5 just a little bit, because it is a unique opportunity and something the City will work with in conjunction with the Chillicothe City School District. He said the plan as it stands now is a work in progress. He said what we are looking at is an application deadline of March 2021 for a project that would not actually break ground until in ODOT's fiscal year of 2024. He said that we are looking out way into the future, but this is a grant that ODOT provides that he has always wanted to get in on. He said we are applying for up to \$400,000, and the Safe Routes to School umbrella is a big one, so there are a lot of different opportunities we have within it. He said that when we get a finalized application, we will want to put it forward with the blessings and support of the School District. Mayor Feeney said that what they are looking at is the general vicinity of the two new schools, as well as the high school and middle schools, which are close together. The Safe Routes to Schools program itself is a K-8 program which would mean that Mt. Logan itself, not housing kindergarteners, is not really an area that we can focus on for this application. He said there are a couple of concepts that they are still working through. One of the main things is when we submit the application it needs to be submitted with an Engineering estimate, which basically means we have pretty acute and accurate dollars to go with the proposal. The type of things you can picture with a proposal like this would be along the lines of sidewalks and crosswalks support. He said if you look at the area particularly around the high school and middle school there are sidewalks right in front, but

extending down Yoctangee, there is room for sidewalk improvement. In addition, he said that thinking of the back side of the school where you have a bike path and then access into the park on Back Road, there are also some opportunities to make those areas safer as well. He said he would like to put forth a proposal that is likely to succeed and have the support of the school and the community, and most of all make the routes to school safer. He said as it goes with these things and in the course of three years there could be some changes, and often times there is some room for modification to those applications. He said that as we proceed, he will provide more details and that he would ask for Council's support on that Resolution tonight. He then asked if anyone had any questions.

Mr. Shoemaker said that the March 5th deadline is fast approaching, and he thinks that delaying this would put this project in jeopardy. Mayor Feeney said that he would agree with that, and he would also like to thank our Transit Director, Asti Powell, who has a lot on her plate but is also the one helping compile the information for this application.

Mayor Feeney said that Item #6 is an application spearheaded by the Ross County Park District and is something that we can support particularly in our joint ownership of Coppel Field. He said that he thinks these last two items represent the way that both the City and County have been actively pushing for grants and seeking to capitalize and sort of have a multiplier effect for local dollars, making projects bigger and more supportive of the community.

Mayor Feeney said that the other item he wanted to express was his thanks for the street crews over the past two to three weeks, working literally day and night, doing the best they possibly can. He said they were running low on salt from time-to-time through no fault of their own; going long hours without breaks, without seeing family, or having rest. He said it is a dangerous job, and it is a job that we truly appreciate. He said he thinks it is easy to get frustrated with the conditions of the streets at times, but the pure science of scrapping ice off of streets can be difficult. Getting salt down in freezing temperatures often has no impact if you lay salt on top of ice when snow is expected in another hour. He said he just wanted to express his appreciation for everybody from the street crews all the way up to the Safety Service Director, Jeff Carman, for their diligence. He said he expressed in his first month on the job this was his biggest concern and the thing he spent the most time thinking about and losing sleep over. He said he believes that the public also appreciates the work that they do, and he just wanted to share that sentiment of thanks for everybody. He said he thinks it is easy to air frustration on Facebook but often times the people who are most appreciative do that somewhat in silence, and so he is saying that out loud. He also wanted to express his condolences to the family of former Retired Police Officer, Reggie Netter for his passing over the weekend, and his condolences to his family at the Chillicothe Police Department and the City of Chillicothe.

Report of Auditor Spetnagel:

City Auditor Spetnagel stated that she did not have anything on the agenda tonight, but she did want to announce that she will be having a meeting before the next Council meeting on March 8th at 6:00 pm, to discuss the first two months of the year and how that is going and to present the 2021 Budget.

Report of Law Director Villarreal:

City Law Director Villarreal stated her office is swamped. She said her office does not have a report but that they are just trying to keep up.

Report of President Arnold:

President Arnold said he did not have anything to report but that he is sure glad to see that the snow is going to go away hopefully soon, at least some of it

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

President Arnold provided information during the public participation portion of the Council meeting to enable the public to communicate with City Council if desired. He added that contact information for any other time is on the website for each Council person if anyone needs to contact them. There were no participants during this meeting.

COUNCIL ASSIGNMENTS AND CALENDAR

There will be a Safety Service Committee meeting March 15th at 6:30 p.m. dealing with livestock within the City limits legislation.

The next Council meeting will be Monday, March 8th at 7:00 p.m. Prior to Council meeting there will be a budget review and final proposal for the 2021 Budget at 6:00 p.m.

READING AND PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION

Ord. No. 09-21 authorizing the City to participate in the Ohio Department of Transportation Cooperative Purchasing Program for road salt was read for the first time by title only. Ms. Lewis moved and Ms. Nickerson seconded that the three-reading rule be suspended, placing this item on final passage. All nine members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the rule suspended. All nine members present then voted “yea” on the item itself, and President Arnold declared Ordinance No. 09-21 adopted.

An Ordinance supporting a Community Yard Sale to be held the weekend of Friday, June 4, 2021 through Sunday, June 6, 2021 and waiving the yard sale permit fee of five dollars (\$5.00) for that weekend was read for the first time by title only.

Ord. No. 10-21 re-appropriating \$8,000.00 for use toward the purchase of decorative sleeves and other necessary items for updating parking meters and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Mr. Shoemaker moved and Mr. Proehl seconded that the three-reading rule be suspended, placing this item on final passage. All nine members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the rule suspended. All nine members present then voted “yea” on the item itself, and President Arnold declared Ordinance No. 10-21 adopted.

Ord. No. 11-21 accepting insurance reimbursement funds in the amount of \$12,370.00, re-appropriating \$14,870.00 for the total cost of replacement and repair of a traffic signal control panel and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Mr. Shoemaker moved and Ms. Lewis seconded that the three-reading rule be suspended, placing this item on final passage. All nine members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the rule suspended. All nine members present then voted “yea” on the item itself, and President Arnold declared Ordinance No. 11-21 adopted.

Res. No. 03-21 authorizing the City of Chillicothe, hereinafter referred to as the Local Public Agency (LPA), to prepare and execute an application for the Safe Routes to School Project and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Mr. Shoemaker moved and Ms. Nickerson seconded that the three-reading rule be suspended, placing this item on final passage. All nine members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the rule suspended. All nine members present then voted “yea” on the item itself, and President Arnold declared Resolution No. 03-21 adopted.

Res. No. 04-21 supporting the Ross County Parks District in its application for Clean Ohio Trails Fund (COTF) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant funds and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Ms. Corcoran moved and Ms. Nickerson seconded that the three-reading rule be suspended, placing this item on final passage. All nine members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the rule suspended. All nine members present then voted “yea” on the item itself, and President Arnold declared Resolution No. 04-21 adopted.

Ms. Gillum moved and Ms. Payne seconded that Council enter into an executive session for the purpose of discussing some issues with the Law Director. All nine members present voted “yea”, and President Arnold declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Feeney suggested that more specific language be used in the motion for going into executive session for Sunshine Law purposes.

Ms. Gillum moved and Ms. Lewis seconded that Council enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing pending litigation due to a records release. All nine members present voted “yea”, and President Arnold declared the motion adopted. At 7:34 p.m. Council logged off of Facebook Live and the executive session was conducted for the stated purpose.

At 8:15 p.m. Council returned to Facebook Live. Ms. Lewis moved and Ms. Gillum seconded that Council go out of the executive session and resume the regular meeting. All nine members present voted “yea”, and President Arnold declared the motion adopted.

President Arnold inquired if there was a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Lewis moved and Ms. Nickerson seconded that the regular meeting be adjourned. All nine members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the motion adopted. Adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Clerk of Council

President of Council