

Video Conference
Regular Meeting
June 22, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Council met via video conference in regular session with all nine members present: Phillips, Payne, Nickerson, Tatman, Lewis, Gillum, Shoemaker, Corcoran and Proehl. Also, in attendance were Mayor Feeney, City Law Director Villarreal, City Auditor Spetnagel, and City Deputy Auditor Large. 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.

The minutes of the regular meeting of June 8, 2020 were accepted and approved, as submitted by the Clerk. All members present voted “yea”, and President Arnold declared the motion adopted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Safety Service Committee:

Ms. Gillum reported that the Safety Service Committee had three items on the agenda. The first being Item #1 which is accepting and appropriating \$781.25 received as a supplemental claims payment from Public Entity Risk Services for painting the Chillicothe Fire Department’s damaged overhead door. Ms. Gillum stated that at the appropriate time she will request to waive the three-read rule, seeking to pass this item tonight. Next, Item #2 which is accepting and appropriating \$606.30 for hazmat reimbursement, and again Ms. Gillum stated that at the appropriate time she will request to waive the three-read rule, seeking to pass this item tonight as well. Finally, Item #3 which is amending Chapter 301 which is regarding the low speed vehicles and golf carts legislation and that will be the first reading.

Engineering Committee

Mr. Shoemaker reported that the Engineering Committee is working together with Mayor Feeney on the second parking meter legislation regarding the location of meters and hopes to have an assignment wrapped up soon. He noted that it is not an easy process, as consideration has to be taken regarding the parking lots as well.

Mayor Feeney added further information about the various aspects of the parking meter legislation. He stated that Council has already approved the funding to actually move the meters, and that the second part will be updating the Codified Ordinances as to giving the specific location and amounts of both the meters on the streets and what is to happen with the paid parking lots the City has now. Mayor Feeney said the current price on the meters to park per hour is \$0.25. They have been communicating with two different vendors to retrofit the meters to accept both coins and pay-by-credit card or app. He added one of the first things that was mentioned by downtown merchants was that there is a worry that people are not always carrying around change anymore, and he feels that this will provide easier access for everybody. Mayor Feeney stated that what he thinks will happen is a recommendation that will come in multiple parts. 1) it will have all of the final locations, 2) it will have a suggested price for on-street parking, 3) it will have a suggested price and solution for parking lots, and 4) a proposal to enter into a contract with a vendor such as Park Mobile.

Mayor Feeney said he appreciates Councilman Shoemaker’s patience with the Administration and mentioned that since the first iteration they have scaled back the locations of the meters, and they are close with the recommendations of the Downtown Development Commission. Mayor Feeney also mentioned that the intern through the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Sam Smith, has been a big help on this project among others.

REPORTS OF OFFICIALS

Report of Mayor Feeney:

Mayor Feeney said that he would like to comment briefly on tonight’s items, mainly Item #3 which could be coined as the golf cart legislation and thanked Councilwoman Gillum on her hard work on this. He said that this is something that in his experience over the last year or two has had almost unanimous support and is something that the Police Department is supportive of as well. He stated that he will be supporting all three pieces of legislation on tonight’s agenda.

Mayor Feeney mentioned that Auditor Spetnagel gave a financial presentation immediately preceding this Council meeting and wanted to give his takeaways from the Administration's standpoint. He stated that the biggest strength the City had coming into this pandemic was the health of our carryover. From a historical perspective seven years ago the carryforward number that we had was \$450,000, and this past year it was north of \$2 million. He stated that for historical perspective, if we had started this year as we had seven years ago, this pandemic would have been a much bigger crisis for the City. There would have been almost immediate layoffs and services that we deliver would look much, much different than they do now. Mayor Feeney added that we entered the year where City Council passed a balanced budget, which we have done for the past seven years at least, which is not required by law but is good practice. The process that we have gone through over the past several months is one of essentially upfront acknowledging that we are going to run into a deficit. He said that virtually based on Auditor Spetnagel's report, our single largest income source is our income tax, and we know that we are going to have less in income tax. Mayor Feeney stated that if you look at Ross County's unemployment numbers for example, it has been tripling/quadrupling in a matter of months. People are going to get back to work but that it's going to still be months where people are unemployed and we are not receiving income tax. He said it is worth mentioning and repeating that Ohio is one of probably less than six states that has local municipality so dependent on local income tax. Therefore, if the economy is good, that is a good thing. It also makes it dramatically worse for us when there is a sharp and quick downturn. He also added that our year-to-date numbers in some areas are "artificially good" because of a matter of timing we are ahead of where we were last year, but we shouldn't expect to be ahead at the end of the year.

Mayor Feeney stated that on the management side in terms of cost savings, Auditor Spetnagel mentioned several things we are doing. He said that we put an almost immediate halt on capital spending. He mentioned that there are still items that were planned, need to happen that we have already budgeted for, and are still going to happen. But anything that we have viewed as possible to put off until a little further we have. As mentioned at the last meeting, the City has nearly 80 employees that are enrolled in the SharedWork Ohio program, which is a 20% reduction of their cost to the City for the remainder of the year max. He stated that there are just a variety of other things we have done with the help of various departments such as attrition in the Fire Department, and then actually the opposite place in the Police Department where we have so many retirements that we are in a pinch to get them back to a healthy staffing level.

Mayor Feeney stated that the overall plan that he and Auditor Spetnagel have put together is essentially a managed deficit and hopefully arriving at a carryover that is something we can budget into next year expecting that it is very possible that income taxes will not return to 2018/2019 levels right away. He said we are just trying to put ourselves in a manageable space, and he thanked Auditor Spetnagel for thoroughly going line-by-line to project when those amounts are going to hit, and that he just appreciates all that she is doing. He said he wanted to make sure Council feels well informed on that topic and with her presentation he feels that they probably do.

Mayor Feeney stated that Friday marked the end of Fire Chief Jeff Creed's career with the City. He said that he has really done a lot for leadership and structure not only for the Fire Department but also as he works with his Department Heads, he had asked Chief Creed to take on a bigger management role and mentorship of some of the other Department Heads outside of the Fire Department. His loss will be noticed beyond just the Fire Department. That said there are two new Captains, a new Assistant Fire Chief, and a new Chief were all promoted today at a nice ceremony at the Fire Department. He stated that it really is a good system that they have there and Chief Creed really put a lot of time and energy in that transition. We thank him for his service to the City and for this new slate of leadership for coming on board.

Report of Auditor Spetnagel:

City Auditor Spetnagel stated that before this meeting she held a Budget Review and offered if anyone had any questions or if they missed that and wanted to stop by her office that she would welcome that. She also mentioned that her office uses OpenGov, which can be viewed on the City of Chillicothe website under the Auditor's office, which shows a summary of the monthly reports and tracks everything that happens in the Auditor's office

Report of Law Director Villarreal:

City Law Director Villarreal reported that her office has been working with Councilwoman Gillum on the matters of legislation, and she thinks they have turned out nicely and that they are pretty excited about them. She mentioned that things are picking up speed in her office as expected but that they are keeping up with it and everything is going well.

Report of President Arnold:

President Arnold stated that before the next Council meeting it will be July 4th and that he hopes everybody has a safe and happy Fourth of July. He said that with Red, White & Boom, as well as local fireworks, not taking place this year, we can still have a wonderful Fourth and appreciate what Independence Day is all about. President Arnold also mentioned that he hates to see Chief Creed retire, stating that he did a wonderful job and hopes he enjoys his retirement and has a good time.

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. There were no participants. President Arnold mentioned that if anyone ever has any questions after the meetings that they are welcome to contact him, as well as any of the Council members, via their emails that can be found on the City of Chillicothe website so that they can help in any way they can.

NEW BUSINESS

Auditor Spetnagel mentioned that she will be conducting the Tax Budget Hearing before the City Council meeting on July 13, 2020 at 6:45 p.m.

Ms. Corcoran asked if there have been any energy savings programs that the City is working with. She said she knows there is somebody who works with the County on that and wondered if we have had any discussions or have looked any further into those energy cost savings that are provided from these companies.

Mayor Feeney stated we have done just about everything we can do with our facilities. A few years ago the City obtained estimates on the HVAC for the City Administration Building, and we upgraded the management of the system so that it can be adjusted remotely and turned off earlier in the day. He said we did not upgrade the system because it was in the middle of the facilities study. There are other opportunities with lighting, particularly traffic lights and street lights. Mayor Feeney said he has had conversations with Safety Service Director Carman about this topic prior to the pandemic and thinks this would be great thing to revisit.

COUNCIL ASSIGNMENTS AND CALENDAR

President Arnold announced that there are several new committee assignments since the last meeting, some of which are on this meeting's agenda, for inclusion in the Journal of Council:

City Services: Appropriate \$10,000 for HVAC repair

Safety Services: Accept and appropriate \$606.30 for hazmat reimbursement; on agenda tonight

Finance: Support for the City's participation in the Coronavirus Act and Relief in Economic Security

Finance: Support for separate revenue funds to tract Coronavirus relief

Community Affairs: Discussion and possible legislation for the location of the Christmas skating rink

Engineering: Approve a lot split, amend boundary lines, and establish zoning lines for three parcels in the Sunrush area on Western Avenue

Parks & Recreation: Appropriate \$10,500 for roof replacement for two of the park's restrooms

Engineering: Request to name a street Hinton Way close to school

Safety Services: Amend two ordinances pertaining to a real estate agreement with the City and Adena Health System; a matter of amending to the correct address

READING AND PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION

Ord. No. 43-20 accepting and appropriating \$781.25 received as a supplemental claims payment from Public Entity Risk Services for painting the Chillicothe Fire Department's damaged overhead door and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Ms. Gillum 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. 43-20 adopted.

Ord. No. 44-20 accepting and appropriating \$606.30 for hazmat reimbursement and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Ms. Gillum moved and Ms. Payne 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. 44-20 adopted.

An Ordinance amending Chapter 301 – Definitions of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Chillicothe and enacting Chapter 343 – Underspeed Vehicles was read for the first time by title only.

President Arnold inquired if there was a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Gillum moved and Ms. Lewis seconded that the regular meeting be adjourned. All nine members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the motion adopted. Adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Clerk of Council

President of Council

