

Council met via video conference in regular session with eight of the nine members present: Phillips, Nickerson, Tatman, Lewis, Gillum, Shoemaker, Corcoran and Proehl. Councilwoman Payne was absent. 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 November 9, 2020 be accepted and approved, as submitted by the Clerk. All members present voted “yea”, and President Arnold declared the motion adopted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Engineering Committee:

Mr. Shoemaker stated that the Engineering Committee did not have any items on the agenda; therefore, there was nothing to report.

Utilities Committee:

Mr. Tatman reported that the Utilities Committee did not have any items on the agenda; however, he did state that he has assignment #20-098 that will go into next year for further discussion for the Utilities Department rules and regulations.

City Services / Transit Committee:

Ms. Lewis reported that the City Services Committee did not have any items on the agenda; however, she stated that she has assignment #20-107 concerning fees for recycle bins and dumpsters as well as assignment #20-095 concerning changes to the taxi cab ordinance, both of which she is still collecting data for. President Arnold stated that there is also an additional assignment, #20-026, that was for a \$15,000 appropriation for chipping and grinding waste at Renick Avenue, but he added that more information is to come from Safety Service Director, Jeff Carman, regarding the actual figure needed to complete the job. He indicated that he can take it off the active list since it will need modifications.

Community Affairs Committee:

Mr. Phillips stated that the Community Affairs Committee did not have any items on the agenda; therefore, there was nothing to report. He stated that all assignments for his committee are up to date at this time.

Finance / Technology Committee:

Mr. Proehl reported the Finance Committee did not have any items on the agenda; however, he has two items that he would like to talk about and would like to call a committee meeting next Monday, November 30th, after the public hearing. He said that those items are #20-113 and #20-115.

Parks / Recreation / Tourism Committee:

Ms. Corcoran stated that the Parks & Recreation Committee had two items on the agenda, Item #3, which is an ordinance appropriating \$5,000.00 for maintenance at the Coppel Soccer Complex, which is annual funding that the City cooperatively joins with the Ross County Parks Department to maintain that property. She stated that at the appropriate time she will ask to waive the three-read rule so that we can get them paid this year. The other item is Item #4, which is appropriating \$2,875.00 for repair of the swimming pool pump walkway. She stated that this item has already been repaired due to the safety concerns, and she said that she will also at the appropriate time ask to waive the three-read rule for this item. Ms. Corcoran stated that her committee has another assignment, #20-114, which regards transferring \$250,000 from the General Fund in order to pay for improvements to the Armory that will be funded by a grant. She said that we have already been approved for it, but we have to pay the bills to the contractors and then we will be reimbursed. She said that she would like to have a committee meeting to discuss this item after the Finance meeting next Monday, November 30th.

Development Committee:

Ms. Nickerson stated that the Development Committee has an assignment, #20-110, which concerns a promotional van at 1 North Paint Street, which she hopes to either table it or move forward with it shortly.

Safety Service Committee:

Ms. Gillum stated that the Safety Service Committee had Item #2 on the agenda, which is an ordinance appropriating funds in the amount of \$3,201.20 for use toward the purchase of uniforms and body armor for Chillicothe Municipal Court employees. She stated that at the appropriate time she will ask to waive the three-read rule for this item. As far as upcoming legislation, she said that her committee has assignment #20-117, which is a request for legislation to enter into an agreement with the Ross County Commissioners for Indigent Defense. She said that she will be working with the Law Director's office on that this week. She also has #20-102 regarding the HVAC system for Municipal Court, and the Law Director's office is currently working on this. Ms. Gillum stated that looking into the future that assignment #20-022, which is regarding the fire station on Centennial Boulevard, is something that they should look at uncommitting after the first of the year since the Fire Department had worked so hard in getting those funds for this project. Also, #19-093 regarding livestock inside City limits is something that she has been doing research on but is not ready to bring anything to Council yet. President Arnold asked her if she would like to also have a committee meeting next Monday, November 30th to discuss #20-022, and she agreed that would be desirable.

REPORTS OF OFFICIALS**Report of Auditor Spetnagel:**

City Auditor Spetnagel stated that she did not have anything on the agenda, but that she wanted to remind everyone that she will be doing a budget review for the 2021 Budget on December 14th prior to the next Council meeting at 6:30 p.m. She stated that she will have two additional assignments for Council.

Report of Mayor Feeney:

Mayor Feeney said that because of the gravity of the situation the only topic he would like to report on is the status of our community under this COVID-19 pandemic. He said that Council has been meeting twice a month in this situation, sometimes more if there were committee meetings. Eight months ago he sat in the park, and the City lit the star on top of the hill. Many of us, if not all of us hoped this would be over by now, and he doesn't know if any of us expected it to go this long. He said it is pretty clear that we have entered a new phase that is much more dire than we have seen before. He said for his own personal edification and trying to give himself a point of reference, if he looks back to just one month ago in Ohio, there were 2,518 new cases. Yesterday on November 22nd there were 8,133 cases reported in Ohio; 6,000 more day to day just a month later. He stated that Chillicothe and Ross County are not exempt from these problems, and we have had multiple consecutive days over and over with double digit increases anywhere from 20's to 50's. He said we have community leaders at every level, whether it is private industry, at the hospital, major employers like Kenworth and Pixelle, and your elected officials, particularly in the school system, that are trying so hard to keep us in business, keep us afloat, keep us in school. He added that we have a Governor who has done his best to keep us in a situation where we can have a productive economy and still be safe. It has become clear to him that regardless of the rules that are promulgated or the information that is passed down, at the end of the day, here in Chillicothe and Ross County, we really have the capacity, just like we do when we rise up and we have a booming downtown despite of the other problems or how we fight back against the opioid epidemic locally, we have the talent and the passion and the heart here locally to make a difference and to really improve the situation for our friends and neighbors.

Mayor Feeney stated that frankly he does not give a damn about what is happening in the nation, and he does not give a damn about national politics right now. He just cares about this community and our opportunity. He said that he thinks that we have the chance to be good to our friends and to be good to our neighbors. He said we all have our personal opinions about how we got here and where is it going, but the reality is if the numbers don't change, the Governor and others are going to be forced to put rules upon us that frankly are going to be debilitating. He said that he talked with business owners today who every day are worried about not really themselves and how they are doing, but the people they employ and what their families are going to do. And as an aside, he said if you are a consumer in Chillicothe, please don't take your frustrations out on the shop owners, or the clerks, or the waitstaff who tell you to put on a mask; because they have been told to tell you that. It is not their decision and it has been put upon them because of the situation we are in.

He said they are just trying to make a living and are just trying to stay in business to take home food to their families. He asked if you are going to be frustrated to pass that frustration onto him, onto government or onto anywhere other than the people who are trying to feed you or keep you entertained.

Mayor Feeney said that he thinks as we head into this Thanksgiving holiday, we have a unique opportunity in time. He said he will admit that at times he has gotten lazy and has not done his best. He said everybody's personal family situation is different, and he would really, really like to be around a lot of family this weekend but knows it is not the right thing to do. He thinks that if we see lots of large family gatherings over the next few days, we will see the number he just mentioned spike even higher, and we will see people above us be forced to make decisions that will impact our local community in ways we might not be able to weather.

Mayor Feeney said he has a few things to offer and to suggest that we take on personally; because if we all just do a little bit more and endure this inconvenience and discomfort for just a little longer, we will have the opportunity to make a difference for our families, and our businesses, and our local economy, and our community that can help us get through this. Otherwise, it could be along dark winter. One is stay home for Thanksgiving. He said it is not going to be easy and it is not going to feel great; he thinks this year to stay home and be thankful for whatever you can find in your life to be thankful for. He said while you are home, order in. There are plenty of restaurants and places in town that are making Thanksgiving meals, and there are ways to support our local economy and our shops and or workers, especially in a community that is so driven by a service economy. He said when we get passed this Thanksgiving where we have all stayed home, have relaxed, and tried to enjoy our families, think about shopping locally these holidays. It is not always an easy thing, particularly with how convenient Amazon is and online retailers. He said he will also be having conversations with local retailers about making that type of shopping easier for the community. He thinks supporting local this year will be more important than ever before.

Mayor Feeney said the other thing that he wants to encourage is to really think about selfcare and patience, not only with others but also with yourself. He said he thinks that we can all recognize that this is one of the most trying times, not just in recent memory, but in American history. We are all going through things in our personal and family lives, on top of a pandemic, that makes this time really hard. When you are with family or when you do frequent a restaurant, which he does encourage you to do in a safe way because we do have plenty of establishments that are doing so well with enforcing rules. It is really an unfortunate situation to be placed in to be the enforcer of rules that they didn't ask for. But he said to be patient with yourself and be patient with others. If we can as individuals and families and friends make decisions to just give ourselves a little space over the coming days and months, he thinks that we can start to change the trajectory, especially locally. He said everything that you are hearing about hospital beds and about the capacity of ICU's, all those things are accurate whether it is Ohio, Ross County, or Chillicothe; this struggle is real regardless of your personal opinion on it. He stated that until the numbers go in a different direction, the struggle will be real for business owners, families, and parents with kids in school. He said that this is a personal plea to individuals, and it is even a reminder to himself, to do better and look out for each other and go into this Thanksgiving holiday if possible with something to be thankful for. He said to appreciate the people around you and try to stay away from those big crowds. Hopefully we can get these numbers turned around and really enjoy Christmas, which is one of his favorite times here in Chillicothe; and again, have reason to be appreciative and thankful going into the season.

Report of Law Director Villarreal:

City Law Director Villarreal stated that everybody is keeping her office very busy with all of their legislation and questions and contracts that they are reviewing and working on feverishly. The courts are continuously keeping them very busy as well. She said other than that, it is pretty much the same thing that they have been doing 100% all of the time.

Report of President Arnold:

President Arnold said that after what the Mayor has said, that there is absolutely nothing he knows to add other than to just reiterate to everybody to be safe. He said he knows his family is not going to gather this year, and asked that everyone try to stay within the guidelines that have been given to us to protect ourselves and to protect other people. He said he hopes that if we use patience and perseverance that eventually we will all get through this sooner than later. He said for everybody to be safe and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

President Arnold inquired if there was a motion to excuse Ms. Payne from the meeting tonight. Mr. Proehl moved and Mrs. Lewis seconded that Ms. Payne be excused from the meeting. All nine members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the motion adopted.

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. He also invited anyone who would like to be added to his mailing list to contact him directly. There were no participants during this meeting.

Ms. Payne joined the meeting via Zoom at 7:34 p.m.

COUNCIL ASSIGNMENTS AND CALENDAR

Public Hearing will be on Monday, November 30th at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the Downtown Redevelopment District Legislation.

Monday, November 30th immediately after the Public Hearing: Finance Committee meeting, Parks & Recreation Committee meeting, and Safety Services Committee meeting.

The next Council meeting will be Monday, December 14th at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Review will be Monday, December 14th prior to the Regular Council meeting at 6:30 p.m.

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

Development: Request for legislation to permit 50 West to park a promotional van in front of 1 North Paint Street.

Community Affairs: Request for legislation to support and fund up to \$10,000 for a request for proposal of a Fair Housing Assessment for Ross County and the Chillicothe area

Safety Services: Request for legislation to accept \$34,000 VOCA Grant and \$2,709 SVAA Grant to fund the Municipal Court Victim Witness Assistance Program

Finance: Request for legislation to transfer \$125,000 from General Fund to Income Tax Refunds

Parks & Recreation: Request for legislation to appropriate \$250,000 from General Fund to Parks & Recreation for Armory renovations and to be refunded when the grant is awarded and received

Finance: Request for legislation to strongly oppose Senate Bill 352 and House Bill 754 that deals with the collection of local income tax withholdings

Finance: Request for legislation to transfer \$28,348.00 from Information Technology salary expenses to Outside Contracts

Safety Services: Request for legislation for the City to enter into an agreement with the Ross County Commissioners for Indigent Defense

READING AND PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION

An ordinance creating the Chillicothe Downtown Redevelopment District 1, Chillicothe Downtown Redevelopment District 2, Chillicothe Downtown Redevelopment District 3, and Chillicothe Downtown Redevelopment District 4, declaring the improvement to certain parcels of real property to be a public purpose; exempting seventy percent (70%) of the value of such improvements from real property taxation for a period of thirty years; requiring the owner of the parcels to make service payments in lieu of taxes; specifying the plan for using service payments to promote economic development and job creation; authorizing the execution of an Economic Development Plan; establishing the Chillicothe Downtown Redevelopment District 1 Fund, Chillicothe Downtown Redevelopment District 2 Fund, Chillicothe Downtown Redevelopment District 3 Fund, and Chillicothe Downtown Redevelopment District 4 Fund for the deposit of such service payments; and approving related matters was read for the second time by title only.

Ord. No. 96-20 appropriating funds in the amount of \$3,201.20, for use towards the purchase of uniforms and body armor, for Chillicothe Municipal Court employees, and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Ms. Gillum moved and Mr. Phillips 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. 96-20 adopted.

Ord. No. 97-20 appropriating \$5,000.00, for maintenance at the Coppel Soccer Complex, and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Ms. Corcoran 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. 97-20 adopted.

Ord. No. 98-20 appropriating \$2,875.00, for repair of the swimming pool, pump, walkway, and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Ms. Corcoran 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. 98-20 adopted.

President Arnold inquired if there was a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Nickerson 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 7:45 p.m.

Clerk of Council

President of Council