

MINUTES OF THE VAN WERT CITY COUNCIL

April 25th, 2022

President Jerry Mazur called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Pastor Keith Stoller gave the invocation.

On call of the roll: Marshall, Kallas, Bowers, Agler, Stinnett, Moore, and Davis were present.

Mazur noted an amendment to the Agenda, stating that Kim Fleming was unable to attend in order to provide an update on the Visit Van Wert Information Center. He stated that her report would be moved to the May 9, 2022 Agenda.

Davis made a motion to approve the amended agenda for the April 25th Council meeting. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Davis made a motion to approve the minutes for the April 11th Council meeting. Agler seconded; all concurred.

COMMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS, & PETITIONS

Mazur stated that the lone communication received since the last meeting was a flyer he received from the Ohio Municipal League, regarding a "Summer Regional Conference Series". Mazur encouraged Council members to attend if they could.

Markward clarified the signup process for the conferences with Balyeat, who stated that registration can only be done online. Balyeat informed Council there is money in the budget to pay for registrations.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

MAYOR: Markward commented on the success, in his opinion, of the livestream of the last Council meeting. He discussed the microphones used during Council meetings, and noted an additional microphone that had been set up to catch audio from the public. In the future, a standard microphone may be used for picking up public audio, or a ceiling microphone may be used. Markward asked the public to provide feedback as they watch the livestreams.

SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR: Fleming stated that there have been complaints from residents on 1st St. (between Jefferson St. and Washington St.) regarding the difficulty in driving down that street with large trucks parked on each side. He recommended that Council pass legislation to authorize placement of “No Parking” signs on the north side of 1st St. in that stretch.

Fleming informed Council and the public that brush pickup will occur May 16, 2022. He reminded the public to have their brush out on Monday, as they will cover all the wards on that day. He also asked that brush is not stacked near poles, signs, or trees, as this is much more difficult to collect. Other brush pickup dates were given as June 27, 2022, and August 22, 2022.

Fleming also reminded the public and politicians that signs are not allowed to be placed in the right-of-ways. They need to be placed behind sidewalks.

Fleming then reviewed the tentative schedule, and detailed the outlook, for the 2022 street paving projects. Initially, Fleming stated they had a goal of \$1 million, but they have scaled back and are now around \$500,000 due to the rise in costs of materials needed.

Fleming also reviewed the “Hazardous Mitigation Plan” for the city and the county. He noted this process had been initiated a couple years ago, had been written to meet FEMA’s requirements, and now needed Council’s approval. (A document link would be placed on the city website.)

Agler asked if Fleming could look at Franklin St., from Central Ave. to Greenwald St., and possibly add that section of street to the city’s paving projects list. Fleming stated he would look at that area.

Davis asked if the city was just continuing to resurface city streets, or if there were plans to install curbs and gutters. Fleming stated that cost comes into play, and that when streets are a total reconstruction project, they will likely get curbs and gutters (S. Race as an example). On projects that are only an “overlay”, it can cost up nearly four times the amount to excavate the street and install those features. Davis then asked if the city had a long-term plan for reconstructing streets in the city. Fleming explained that the city has been fortunate to receive Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) funding for many of these projects, but that funding also has limits. ODOT has a list of streets, based on travelage and infrastructure, that are eligible for funding. He also explained that the Leeson Ave. project was the last eligible street on ODOT’s list, so funding may be ending soon. He also noted that funding doesn’t go very far for street reconstruction. It was noted that even in the best years, it may take 2-3 years to save enough money to reconstruct small sections of city streets.

Fran Turnwald, 13729 Jennings Rd, who manages the Sunrise Court Apartments, detailed a problem that she has with tree and branch debris left on her property, after AEP cut down a tree at the request of a neighbor. She stated that she called the city office, received a contact number for AEP, and when she called AEP, it was implied by AEP that the city would take care of the tree and debris. Fleming stated that the neighbor approached the city about that tree a year ago, and the city advised that it not be cut down. This particular person proceeded to call AEP and have it cut down, and told AEP that the city would clean it up, which the city never agreed to (and wasn't aware of), and is out of their right-of-way. That area is AEP's right-of-way, and is not in a location that the city would service. It was noted that this would be a civil matter between Turnwald and the neighbor. Additional discussion ensued, and Turnwald stated that she will contact AEP again regarding the matter.

Mark Davis, 402 S. Tyler St., asked if the trucks on 1st St. are legally parked. Fleming stated they were. Mr. Davis (S. Tyler St.) stated that city ordinance requires at least 10 feet between parked vehicles, and if there isn't at least 10 feet, one of the trucks can be asked to move. Fleming stated that there is at least 10 feet, but it still is a very tight fit to drive between the trucks.

Mr. Davis (S. Tyler St.) also asked Fleming if he had driven down Race St. and looked into the light issue he had mentioned at a previous meeting. Fleming stated he had, but had been unable to reach the owner to discuss adjusting the light's angle. Hatcher stated he had discussed the issue with the resident, and will have a follow-up conversation about rotating the light down off of the street.

AUDITOR: Balyeat detailed an invoice to True Vine Tree Service, in the amount of \$3937.00, that would need approved on a Then and Now.

Balyeat also stated that she has received several requests for supplemental appropriations, and she asked Agler to request legislation to authorize those appropriations.

LAW DIRECTOR: Hatcher informed Council that he has made additional revisions to the blighted property letter based on additional feedback received.

Hatcher also provided a court update, noting that OVIs are trending down, but domestic violence is trending up. He has also been working through several junk and rubbish cases. He also noted that some cases involved tenants being cited for junk/rubbish situations where landlords were leaving building materials on properties for extended periods of time, and this was being addressed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HEALTH, SERVICE, and SAFETY: Marshall made a motion to ask the Law Director to prepare legislation to approve the Van Wert County Hazard Mitigation Plan, and declaring an emergency. Kallas seconded; all concurred.

Marshall made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number 22-04-023. Kallas seconded; all concurred.

Marshall made a motion to suspend statutory rules for Ordinance Number 22-04-023. Kallas seconded; all concurred.

Marshall made a motion to pass Ordinance Number 22-04-023: AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE VAN WERT COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN DATED JANUARY 2022; AND DECLARING THE SAME AS AN EMERGENCY., on its first and final reading. Kallas seconded; all concurred.

Marshall asked if the blighted property letter was ready to send out. He stated that he would provide Marshall with the updated version, and the feedback that was recently provided, so that he could review.

Health, Service, and Safety had no additional report for the evening.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Kallas turned the floor over to Stacy Adam.

Adam stated that the MBK/Custom Assembly project in Vision Park closed last Friday, and that construction should begin in September 2022 and finish by March 2023. Adam also detailed Unverferth expansion plans, which is on the Van Wert side of Delphos. They are constructing a new 20,000 square foot building, and renovating an existing 38,000 square foot building. This is a \$4.7 million investment, and will provide 20 new jobs.

Adam informed Council that with the Revolving Loan Fund, they have loaned funds to Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken (on the Van Wert side of Delphos).

Adams also addressed questions they had received regarding the progress on the Old Van Wert Inn on Washington St. She stated that have submitted a \$731,000 Brownfield Grant application, and a \$700,000 Building Demolition and Revitalization Grant. They anticipate receiving the bulk of both requests, but have not received notification from the state yet. She explained they are ready to move on the project, but need notification from the state. The project will begin when they receive that notification.

Adam also spoke on the Community Housing Impact and Preservation Program (CHIP) program, which is now open in Van Wert County. She explained this is a program to provide financial aid for renovation or repairs on owner-occupied residences. This includes repairs to roofs, gutters, lead paint issues, heating systems, water heaters, plumbing issues, water and sewage issues, electrical problems, or structural issues. She also explained there are income-eligibility guidelines, which differ between single repair issues or renovation projects. Applications are now open, and questions can be directed to the Van Wert Area Economic Development Corporation.

Adam notified Council that an existing daycare company will open two locations in Van Wert County, one in Convoy, and the other at the Thomas Edison Center. The Van Wert location will open first. Job applications and registrations are already open. They are targeting a June open date, for infants to children 13 years of age.

Adam also updated Council on the latest draft of the Strategic Plan. She recognized that there are several new Council members, who may not have background with the Strategic Plan, and encouraged Council to look through the document and ask questions or provide feedback. She also noted items that fall under Council's authority.

Mazur asked Adam for the financial ranges of the CHIP grant. Adam stated that income eligibility is based on the number of occupants in the household. A total renovation has a \$50,000 maximum, but exceptions can exceed those limits based on material cost. Owners would have an obligation in the form of a mortgage put on the property, with a 20% forgiveness for 4 years (for a total of 80%), and then a 20% mortgage would remain on the property until it was sold.

Pastor Stoller asked if the Custom Assembly expansion was in addition to what was located in Haviland. This was confirmed. Adam stated that it was an approximate 100,000 square foot facility. This would be in the same location of the new Alliance Automation and new spec buildings that have been constructed along US 30.

Joe Jared, 233 Burt. St., asked if he understood correctly that the state of Ohio is giving the CHIP grant money to the VWAEDC, and then they are effectively lending it to Van Wert residents. Adam clarified that Ohio gives the CHIP grant money to Van Wert County, and VWAEDC administers - not receives - the money on behalf of the county. Jared then asked if the property owner has 20% of the debt from the money received owed to VWAEDC. Adam stated it is not owed to VWAEDC, but to the county. She also explained that any mortgage monies collected are recirculated to future CHIP repairs or renovations in the next cycles. Additional discussion followed on the historical changes to the mortgage requirements, and the city and county roles in the program, but Adam also reiterated that VWAEDC is only involved as the administrators of the program.

Markward asked if the new daycare was offering second shift care. Adam stated that is not the initial plan, but may be an option in the future. Bowers asked if there is a specific number of children they are targeting for enrollment. Adam did not know the exact number, but did state that the state requires a certain square footage per child in these facilities. A question was asked on financial support for enrollment, and Adam did believe that there might be financial options for subsidy through Child and Family Services. Moore asked if there were plans for before school or after school care for school-aged children, as well as transportation to and from schools. Adam stated that a Defiance location did have a bus, but she was not certain about those programs or about transportation at this time. She stated she would forward information to Council in the coming days.

Economic Development had no additional report for the evening.

PARKS AND RECREATION: Bowers stated that a private citizen approached her about a peony donation. They are discussing this possibility, but if it does move forward, planting wouldn't begin until September. Mazur stated that at one time, there was a large number of peonies planted at Smiley Park, but no one took care of them. Bowers stated that this person has a group lined up to plant and maintain, and has discussed this with the Van Wert County Foundation.

Parks and Recreation had no additional report for the evening.

FINANCE: Agler made a motion to ask the Law Director to prepare legislation to make supplemental appropriations. Stinnett seconded; all concurred.

Agler made a motion to approve the invoice to True Vine Tree Service (\$3,937.00) on a Then and Now. Stinnett seconded; all concurred.

Finance had no additional report for the evening.

PROPERTIES AND EQUIPMENT: Properties and Equipment had no report for the evening.

STREETS AND ALLEYS: Moore made a motion to ask the Law Director to prepare legislation to advertise and bid for paving work in the city, on an emergency. Kallas seconded; all concurred.

Moore made a motion to ask the Law Director to prepare legislation to make the north side of 1st St., between Jefferson St. and Washington St., a no parking area. Kallas seconded; all concurred.

Streets and Alleys had no additional report for the evening.

JUDICIARY AND ANNEXATION: Davis commented that his family attended the American Legion Easter Egg Hunt, and it was a well-run event. He thanked the Legion for that event.

Davis also stated a job description is laid out for the new position at the airport, and they are “targeting their ad” for someone who would be a long-term employee at the airport.

Judiciary and Annexation had no additional report for the evening.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mazur noted they had addressed the live-streaming of Council meetings already, and the parking lot conversation would resume at the May 9, 2022 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Davis addressed a piece of the Strategic Plan, which involved a community waste management system for sanitary conditions, and was deemed under the city purview. Davis said he would like to discuss in the future how the city should approach that, what the community would like to see, and how Council would move forward on that issue.

CONSENT AGENDA


There were no items on the Consent Agenda.


RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES

There were no additional resolutions or ordinances to be read.

ADJOURN

Agler made a motion to adjourn at 7:33 p.m. Kallas seconded; all concurred.


Clerk of Council
Andrew Bittner


Council President
Gerald T. Mazur

05/09/2022

Date