



Martins Ferry City Council Meeting Minutes of February 21, 2018

The Martins Ferry City Council met in Regular Session on Wednesday, February 21, 2018, at 6:00 p.m., at the Donald Myers Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order by Council President Kristine Davis with the Pledge of Allegiance recited by those present in chamber, followed by a prayer by the Clerk.

Answering Roll Call were Bob Hunker, First Ward Council Member; Suzanne Armstrong, Third Ward Council Member; and Rick Rodgers, Fourth Ward Council Member; Thomas Burns, Jim Schramm, and Jack Regis, Council At Large. President Davis advised the members that Council Member Bruce Shrodes asked to be excused this evening.

Minutes: Minutes from the January 17, 2018, Council Meeting were approved as received.

Correspondence: A Notice from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control was received to determine if Council would request a hearing for the Liquor Permit of Dolgen Midwest LLC, dba Dollar General Store 2863. President Davis directed the notice to be discussed under Miscellaneous Business.

Reports of Officers of the City:

Mayor:

Mayor Krajnyak stated the city was evaluating the damage because of the flooding and heavy rains over the last week. The Belmont County EMA has requested a report on all the areas within the city that sustained damage, which will be completed for submission to the State or FEMA to try to get a declaration. Mr. Hunker suggested adding the sewer area to the report based upon a discussion with Andy Sutak. Mr. Hunker expressed concern that the asphalt has begun to break away causing water to run under the sewer and the potential for greater damage not only to that area specifically, but also the hillside above it.

Service Director:

Mr. Cleary confirmed the flooding issues the Mayor had mentioned, including the sanitary-sewer line that broke on Glenn Runs Road, which was repaired and reported to EPA as required. Mr. Cleary thanked the Street, Sewer and Water crews that all contributed to repairing the damage. Mr. Cleary invited Council to look at Bruney's Alley, located off Cemetery Road behind Jaycee Manor. Mr. Cleary said the massive flooding caused water to overtake the banks taking out a large portion of that alley, a large portion of the culvert pipe and the sidewalls in that area. Engineer Jeff Vaughn assessed the damage on Wednesday and will work to help secure some funding.

Mr. Cleary advised Council that he was able to visit Gradall Industries in New Philadelphia, who is making the city's Vac-all truck, which is half-way to completion and should be delivered mid-March. Mr. Cleary stated that the truck will save the city significant operating money with sewer backups rather than calling in other companies. Mr. Cleary expressed his appreciation to the City of St. Clairsville, Mayor Pugh, and their Sewer Department for their help and expects to return the favor once Martins Ferry's truck is complete.

Mr. Cleary said that he has spoken to a representative of ADR and has a meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 22, 2018, on the North 8th Street project and he hopes it will begin as soon as the weather cooperates.

Mr. Cleary also stated that the trash packer is operational once again and sanitation collection is back on schedule, although the dump operation had experienced some mechanical problems, which has affected everyone who utilizes that site.

Finally, Mr. Cleary confirmed that cold-patching of potholes has begun in the most heavily traveled roads, such as Aenta; Center; and Hanover Streets, which will continue as the weather permits.

Mr. Rodgers inquired if there would be anything done with the transfer station, to which Mr. Cleary stated that it would be included in the EMA assessment report because it is completely under water. Mr. Rodgers further advised the Service Director of a dead deer at the bottom of Mackey Avenue on the North-bound lane of Route 7 and a partial slip at the bottom of Cemetery Road near the Polish Club. Mr. Rodgers also asked about the transition to hot patching of potholes and the amount of funds in the budget for patching. Mr. Cleary responded that as soon as the hot-patch material was available through Wilson's he would be happy to begin, because it cheaper than cold patch. Ms. Randall stated that the budget was not complete yet. Mr. Cleary advised the members that he has been approached by the Mayor of Bridgeport for a partnership between the two for a patching machine, as the City of St. Clairsville and Richland Township have done, which would be a cost saving measure.

Auditor:

No Report from Auditor Rita Randall.

Law Director:

No report from Law Director Paul Stecker.

Police Department:

Chief John McFarland advised Council that as of February 9, 2018, Officer Tom Siburt had worked his last official shift at the department before his retirement. Chief McFarland expressed his great appreciation for the work Officer Siburt has done over the years not only as an officer, but as a firearms instructor; training instructor for other officers; independent contractor for remodeling and repairs around the station; and the construction of the gun range. Chief McFarland stated that Tom Siburt was an outstanding officer. Chief McFarland stated that part-time officer Steven Stan had been selected to fill the vacancy as a result of Officer Siburt's retirement.

Chief McFarland stated that over the last few months several officers have attended and will attend during the upcoming year, instructor courses related to school shooter situations; building searches; vehicle approach courses; and field training, to ensure the Martins Ferry Officers are up to date on all training requirements and current laws.

Lastly, Chief McFarland asked Council to move forward to a vote on the lease vehicles for the city, which have discussed over several meetings recently.

Water Department:

Mr. Bill Suto stated that the department have been busy fixing water line breaks and their department is also down two (2) vehicles and he is waiting on a decision on the lease vehicle proposal as well.

Committees of Council:

Finance and Audit: Chairman Regis reminded members that a Finance Committee meeting needs to be set up, dependent on the schedules of the Mayor and Auditor.

Street: No Report from Chairman Rodgers, although he stated a meeting will be set up for the month of April and he would like to revisit the idea of redoing 5th Street.

Sewer/Sidewalk: No Report from Chairman Hunker.

Ordinance: No Report.

Code Administration: No Report from Chairman Regis.

Safety: Chairman Schramm stated that he was also waiting on a decision for the lease vehicle program proposal. Mr. Schramm advised that a meeting with the Waste Water Authority regarding the proposed rate increase will be conducted on Thursday, February 22, 2018, at 4:00 p.m., in Council Chambers, for those interested.

Cemetery: No Report from Chairman Burns, although he did ask for more timely notice regarding meetings. Specifically, his concern was his inability to attend the State Auditor Meeting because of his full-time employment. President Davis assured him that everyone understood his absence and further explained that the meeting was dictated by the State Auditors, rather than set up by mutually agreed schedules.

Public Relations: Chairman Rodgers stated that he and Mrs. Armstrong attended a Chamber meeting on February 21, 2018, at which he shared with Chamber members the amount of salt the city has utilized this winter and updated them on completion of the sewer vac in approximately a month. Chairman Rodgers also mentioned that a mental health specialist with Crossroads Counseling Services who spoke at the meeting was very impressive.

Real Estate: No Report from Chairman Hunker.

Citizens to be Heard:

Robert George of 1050 Pearl Street spoke of what he believes is a depression not only for Martins Ferry, but the surrounding areas. He suggested that the city explore the indoor trampoline franchise, Sky Zone, to revitalize the area and provide families with local entertainment. Mr. George asked what the city was currently doing to help revitalize the area. Mayor Krajnyak stated that he appreciated Mr. George's concerns and his door was always open for him to come to his office to discuss his ideas. Mr. Krajnyak assured Mr. George that he is actively working on ways to improve the city including a recent contact by a business from the Columbus area that may be interested in a one (1) acre lot. He went on to state that the ongoing work on the Bauer Ford Lot is nearing to a close on a positive note, in addition to interest in properties on First Street that would be in addition to the six (6) new business that have already opened there. Mr. George asked if there was a Development Committee, to which the Mayor and Mr. Cleary advised that Council did have such a committee. Mr. Hunker advised that Mr. Rodgers and Mrs. Armstrong were the Liaisons for that Committee for Mr. George to contact for additional information.

George Haggard of 712 Broadway inquired about water and sewage bills for rental property he owns. He asked if they were permitted to be placed in the tenant's name or if they were required to be in his name and if he was responsible for any outstanding bills should the tenant not pay. Mr. Cleary advised Mr. Haggard that unfortunately, as part of the Ohio Revised Code, the owner of the property is ultimately responsible for the water and sewer bill.

Richard Hord of 915 Virginia Street asked if the city officials were any closer to announcement about the Bauer Ford lot. Mayor Krajnyak responded that they were still waiting on a report about the property for the developer and reiterated his belief that it will be positive.

Mr. Hord inquired if the city had seen any improvements to East Ohio Regional Hospital since the facility was now owned and operated by Alecto. Mayor Krajnyak stated that based upon what he has witnessed and meetings he has attended, he believes things are moving in the right direction. Mayor Krajnyak went on to state that his personal experience over the Christmas holiday, wherein he went to the emergency room that included x-rays and stitches, resulting in a visit that didn't take more than an hour and a half, which he was very pleased with.

Mr. Hord further advised Council that he spoke with the Martins Ferry Chamber of Commerce about the possibility of a Meet the Candidates night for the Primary Elections, which has never been done. Mr. Hord also suggested a plaque, similar to the one outside the Mayor's Office, to honor the former Chiefs of Police for the city. Mayor Krajnyak confirmed that Officer Scales had provided that information to him and they would continue working on verifying all the names of former Chiefs of Police by checking the archives for the project.

Ordinances and Resolutions: None

Miscellaneous Business:

Mr. Schramm moved to excuse Mr. Shrodes from the evening's council meeting. Said motion was seconded by Mr. Hunker. A roll call vote was heard with Council members Schramm, Regis, Hunker, Armstrong, Rodgers and Burns voting yes. The motion was declared passed.

Mr. Regis moved to accept the Reports of Officers, which was seconded by Mr. Schramm. After hearing an affirmative voice vote, the motion was passed.

President Davis stated that as a follow-up to the State Audit and their recommendations, council will have a new Utility Committee with Mr. Hunker as Chairman, Mrs. Armstrong and Mr. Regis as members. President Davis expressed her appreciation for the members taking on the additional responsibility.

Mrs. Armstrong advised that she wanted to schedule a City Income Tax Meeting for some members of the Utility Committee. By agreement of the members the meeting was scheduled for Thursday, March 1, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Hunker reminded Mrs. Armstrong that the Finance Committee should take place first, although a "preliminary meeting" would be acceptable.

Mr. Rodgers inquired if Council was interested in setting up meetings throughout the year at the local fire stations, as they have done in the recent past. After a brief discussion, the consensus was that attendance did not vary enough to continue the practice unless a specific reason such as handicap accessibility for a citizen was necessary, at which time the issue will be re-addressed. Mr. Hunker also suggested the Recreation Center, if needed rather than the Fire Departments.

Mayor Krajnyak suggested finalizing a Finance Committee meeting, which was agreed to be scheduled for Monday, February 26, 2018, at 6:00 p.m.

Chief McFarland asked that council address the police vehicles, but council was not able to do so until after Finance Committee Meeting on February 25, 2018.

Mr. Regis moved to not request a hearing on the liquor license for Dollar General, which was seconded by Mr. Schramm. After hearing an affirmative voice vote, the motion was passed.

Mrs. Armstrong moved to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Rodgers; after an affirmative voice vote the meeting was adjourned with a salute to the flag.

Laura A. Zupko, Clerk of Council

Kristine Davis, Council President