

Minutes of November 18, 2015 Council Meeting

The Martins Ferry City Council met in regular session on Wednesday November 18, 2015 at 6:00 PM in the Liberty Fire Station. The meeting was called to order by Council President Kristine Davis with the Pledge of Allegiance and was followed by a prayer by the Clerk.

Answering roll call were Bruce Shrodes, Second Ward, Rick Rodgers, Fourth Ward, Jack Regis Sr., Chris Cleary, and Rob Duncan, Council at Large.

President Davis reminded Council that no action could be taken on legislation with only five Council Members present.

Correspondence: No correspondence was received.

Minutes: Minutes were approved as received.

Reports of Officers of the City:

Mayor: A copy of the Mayor's report was received and will be made a part of these minutes.

Service Director: Mr. Bennett was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Mayor Riethmiller reported for Mr. Bennett that the production of hot mix is nearing an end. 15 tons have been used on potholes since the last meeting. The cemetery grass has been cut in preparation for winter. Thanks were extended to those who helped put up and take down the flags for Veteran's Day. Work has been completed on the Kennedy Ave. drainage issue. Thanks were also extended for the help with the Christmas decorations. The lighting retrofit project is making a big difference. The sewer truck needs repaired. Finally, the City offices will be closed Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving. Trash will be picked up on Wednesday or Saturday.

Auditor: No report

Law Director: No report

Development Director: A copy of the Development Director's report was distributed and will be made a part of these minutes.

Mr. Rodgers asked about the surveying in Crawford Heights and wanted to know how many lots. Ms. Gagin said the surveyor would decide.

Mr. Rodgers also asked about the insurance on the new equipment. Ms. Gagin said she took care of it.

Code Administrator: No report

Water Superintendent:

Mr. Suto said there had been several water breaks.

The Hillendale Waterline Project is nearing completion. Pressure testing was done today. Flushing was started today and will be completed tomorrow. Bacteria sample results will be in on Friday. Next week the service lines will be transferred and tie in to the main line will be completed.

Mr. Shrodes asked how many water breaks had occurred in Hillendale in the last few years. Mr. Suto said over 30 in the last three years.

Mayor Riethmiller asked about the County Rd. 4 Waterline Project. Mr. Suto said one crew will start on St. Rt. 647 by Hillendale and work toward County Rd. 4. Another crew will start at the other end and they will meet.

Committees of Council:

Finance/Audit: Mr. Cleary reported for Mr. Krajnyak. He said the Finance Committee met last night. The cost allocation needs to be passed by the end of the year. It was distributed to Council members.

Mr. Cleary said there is a projected deficit of \$95,000. The State Auditor's office requested a short term and long term plan for how to deal with this deficit.

The Office Manager position was discussed. The committee believes the position will pay for itself and will take care of problems and restore citizen's faith in the office. The State Auditor feels the position is best.

Mr. Cleary thanked Mr. Suto for the projects that were done this year. Mr. Cleary said collection patterns need to be addressed. He added that infrastructure projects should help.

Street: No report.

Ordinance: No report

Sewer/Sidewalk: No report

Code: No report

Safety: Mr. Stecker was thanked for drawing up the false alarm ordinance.

Service: A meeting will be scheduled before the end of the year.

Cemetery/PR: No report

Citizens to be Heard:

John Applegarth of 521 N. 5th Street discussed a lighting issue near the homes he owns. He said that both are dangerous issues and safety hazards. Mr. Regis will look into the issue and will discuss at the next Safety Committee Mtg.

Richard Hord of 915 Virginia Street thanked everyone for their help with the recent Town Hall Mtg.

Mr. Hord said that the Times Leader recently ran an article regarding Ohio cities that are retired citizen friendly and Martins Ferry was ranked 6th in the state. President Davis said that it is built into our tax ordinance and that the City tries not to have additional taxes and fees.

Jay Hores of 69361 Dutch Hill Rd. asked about restrictions that would be placed on anyone purchasing the newly surveyed property in Crawford Heights. He was concerned that the land could be used for farm animals, mobile homes, or apartments. Mr. Hores was concerned how these could effect the property value of homeowners in the area. It was explained that the area is in the City Limits, therefore all city codes would apply. Mr. Hores explained that the playground gets used a lot by the children. President Davis said that the area had only been surveyed and that no decisions had been made concerning the property. She assured that much discussion and public input would be needed. Mr. Regis said that he has looked at the playground and that it has not been cared for through the years. He thanked Mr. Hores and the other Crawford Heights citizens for their input. Mr. Regis reminded that no decisions have been made and that additional input is wanted. Mr. Shrodes said that he had received a call from someone interested in a lot. He reminded that Crawford Heights is in the City limits and therefore City ordinances would need to be followed. Mayor Reithmiller explained the process of the Lion's Club and City businesses donating for the City Park playground upgrades and the cost of such a project. Mr. Duncan added that cameras were purchased and installed to keep the area safe and monitored. Mr. Cleary asked that citizens don't stop at attending just one meeting. He asked for them to continue to be involved, attend meetings, and provide input. Mr. Cleary said they will be notified of decisions and suggested researching ways to match funding for a grant.

Tom Callarick offered to donate a security system and help with laborers for a playground project.

Ms. Gagin offered her help in finding appropriate grants.

Tom Regis of 1315 Kennedy Ave. said ODNR just gave out \$11 million in grants. He said that the kids use the playground and he understands that it takes money, but grants are available. Mr. Regis suggested speaking with County Commissioner Favade. Mr. Regis added that the Martins Ferry Christmas Parade would be held on November 27 at 6:30 line up at 4:30.

Richard Jackson of 1327 Kennedy Ave. discussed water pressure issues in Crawford Heights and suggested that the problems in Hillendale could be similar. Mr. Suto said that he didn't feel they were but that he would look into the problem. Mr. Jackson also said that kids need a place to play.

Jeremy Shrodes of 1305 N. 7th Street and local AFSCME President asked Mr. Cleary how the Office Manager position would be funded. He added that he felt that raises for the employees would be a better solution and that the employees are underappreciated. Mr. Cleary explained that he and the other Council Members have never said anything ill

toward the City employees and that they are praised often. Mr. Cleary explained that the independent State Auditor asked for the position to be created. Currently, citizens are not receiving bills, Also, there is no way to know what hasn't been collected. This position would help straighten out those issues and would bring in the revenue to pay for itself. President Davis agreed that it was discussed n all the meetings with the State Auditor. She added that there should be another set of hands involved when taking in such a large amount of money. Mr. Rodgers said he was at the Water Plant a month ago and shared a compliment with Mr. Suto. President Davis said she knows all about water breaks and that Council supports all of our employees. Mr. Suto agreed that Council praises the employees 100% and knows how hard they work. Mr. Suto added that he was an employee under a Council that didn't support the workers and this is not that Council. Mr. Regis said this is a business move not a personal issue. He reminded that when Mr. Armstrong was able he was at the garage every day. Mr. Regis said that the State Auditors want more control including a five year plan.

Ordinances and Resolutions:

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE POSITION OF OFFICE MANAGER FOR THE UTILITY OFFICE, AND ESTABLISHING THE ANNUAL SALARY THEREFORE, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2016 was given a first reading. No action was taken and the ordinance will go on to a second reading.

AN ORDINANCE TO REDUCE FALSE ALARMS FOR THE CITY OF MARTINS FERRY POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS was given a first reading. No action was taken and the ordinance will go on to a second reading.

Miscellaneous Business:

Mr. Duncan said that Council needs to look at the Development Director's salary. Mr. Rodgers said he agrees with Mr. Duncan.

Mr. Regis made a motion to accept the reports of Supervisors and Management. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cleary and after hearing an affirmative voice vote the motion was declared passed.

It was suggested that a resolution of appreciation be given to Mr. Collini for the donation of Christmas lights and the ceiling tiles and installation of those tiles at the Recreation Center.

Mr. Shrodes thanked all involved in making the Veteran's Day program a success. He also commended Beth scales for the outstanding job she does with the programs in the park and the holiday decorating.

The Fire Department thanked the veterans for their service.

President Davis thanked the Liberty Fire Station for allowing Council to use the station.

Mr. Rodgers moved to excuse Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Krajnyak. Mr. Shrodes seconded the motion and after hearing an affirmative voice vote the motion was declared passed.

Mayor Riethmiller asked that his positions on various boards be filled quickly.

Mr. Shrodes moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Regis and after hearing an affirmative voice vote the meeting was adjourned with a salute to the flag.

Lee Ann Cleary, Clerk of Council

Council President, Kristine Davis