

ASHTABULA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF ASHTABULA, OHIO
4717 Main Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004

Regular Meeting

Monday, July 6, 2015

CALL TO ORDER: Council met in a **REGULAR MEETING**. The President of Council called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

OPENING CEREMONY (Prayer/Pledge/Moment of Silence): Pastor Doug Wright of First Baptist Church, Park Avenue, offered the opening prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mrs. Alice T. Cook	(Ward 3 Councilor)
Mrs. Josephine Misener	(Ward 4 Councilor)
Mr. August A. Pugliese	(Ward 2 Councilor)
Mr. J. P. Ducro IV	(President)

MEMBER(S) ABSENT:

Mr. Kris E. Hamrick	(Ward 5 Councilor)
Mr. Richard F. Balog	(Ward 1 Councilor)
Mr. Christopher J. McClure	(Vice President)

OFFICER(S) PRESENT:

Mr. James M. Timonere	(City Manager)
Mr. Michael Franklin	(City Solicitor)
Mrs. Dana D. Pinkert	(Finance Director)
Mrs. LaVette E. Hennigan, MMC	(Clerk of Council)

OFFICER(S) ABSENT: None

EXCUSED ABSENCE(S): Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to excuse the Vice President and the Wards 1 and 5 Councilors from this meeting; motion CARRIED.

SUNSHINE LAW: The Clerk of Council certified conformity to the Sunshine Law.

PRESENTATION(S): None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: N/A

RECONVENE OPEN MEETING: N/A

ACTION RESULTING FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION: N/A

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda is a means whereby Council is able to efficiently conduct business by grouping routine items and disposing of or enacting them by one motion, a second, and a vote.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The Clerk of Council presented the following meeting minutes for disposal:

- June 15, 2015 Regular Meeting
- June 22, 2015 Special Meeting

Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to waive the reading of the minutes; motion CARRIED. Hearing no corrections, the minutes were approved as presented.

FORMAL LEGISLATION REQUESTS - None

PUBLIC DISCUSSION (Consent Agenda Legislation Only) - None

LEGISLATION READING - None

(end of consent agenda)

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA

READING AND DISPOSAL OF MEETING MINUTES - None

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mowing Grass Into Roads

The City Manager reported crews have swept the roads, cleaned several catch basins, and jetted storm drains. He said grass mowed into roads adds to clogging and deterioration of our systems. He asked that grass not be placed in the road, and if it is to please remove it. He said, "We will be on the lookout for those things. And, I do realize we'll get complaints that we should be doing other things, but we receive quite a few complaints when these catch basins are full and when they're not working correctly. This is an issue for us that we're going to start addressing in any means that we have to".

Ashtabula County Land Bank (ACLB) Demolition

The City Manager reported the Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) has begun. Many more structures will be let for bid and will be demolished with NIP funds that have been made available to Ashtabula County.

He noted the City is thankful for the portion it has received and for all the work ACLB has done – specifically Melissa Harvey, Director and County Treasurer Dawn Cragon, who put Ashtabula County's program together.

Yard Waste Bag Pickup

The City Manager issued a reminder that yard waste bag pickup will resume October 1. Bags may be delivered to Public Works at anytime. A sign will provide directions on where bags should be placed. He announced bags left on treelawns will not be removed.

Beach Glass Festival & Christopher Columbus Ships

The City Manager thanked everyone who visited these Bridge Street attractions last weekend. Despite the rain they were successful. The ship crews enjoyed their time in Ashtabula and the welcome they received. They promised to return.

Bands-on-the-Beach (Walnut Beach)

The City Manager reported that the 4th of July weekend Bands-on-the-Beach event was packed. He encouraged attendance to continue and asked that the beach be respected. The next event is Sunday, July 26.

Walnut Beach Master Plan (WBMP)

The City Manager reported that with the recent Civic Development Corporation (CDC) grant funding will be used to 'chip away' at the WBMP. The first item will be to relocate the parking lot and restore natural dunes and landscaping. The project will begin next year.

Steam Engine Visit

The City Manager reported that on July 25 and 26, a steam engine from Youngstown will be in town. An estimated 700 visitors are expected and will dine at Casa Capelli, in downtown Ashtabula. Organizations are taking strong leadership in this event, part of which is to have information for the visitors in order to encourage their return.

Paving Project

The City Manager reported paving is coming to a close and numbers are being tallied to determine if funds remain. Much of what needs to be done now are some curbs and a couple items on the punch list.

Traffic Signalization Project

The City Manager reported this project is coming along very nicely.

Final Tank – Waste Water Treatment Plant

The City Manager reported the final tank is coming along well. The equipment has been installed, temporary power has been run, and testing will take place, with the hopes of having it filled by month end.

Once filled and operational for a few days up to a week or two – the western tank will be shut down, drained, and the same process will begin. The tanks were constructed at the same time so the equipment for the western tank is already on site.

Questions and Comments for the City Manager

Demolitions: The Ward 2 Councilor asked how many structures will be demolished. The Manager said the ACLB was initially given \$500,000, and then awarded an additional \$300,000. In the initial application the City of Ashtabula submitted 99 homes. The remainder of the county submitted 14 or 15. Now that the other county areas are seeing what is being done they are attempting to add more to their list. The Manager said the funds need to be distributed accordingly, noting that it is unfortunate that the City of Ashtabula has the most foreclosures in need of razing. Demolition is running between \$15,000 and \$25,000 per property; therefore 30 to 40 homes can be razed.

Road Salt Lawsuit: The Ward 2 Councilor asked if the City of Ashtabula will be reimbursed for salt purchases through this lawsuit. The Manager said the Attorney General's (AG) office has asked municipalities to provide them with price per ton costs for salt purchases beginning in 2006 or 2008 through 2010 so they may determine how to divide the settlement. The Manager said he anticipates we will receive something.

NIP Program: The President said NIP funds are in the form of a grant. The funds represent settlement money from mortgage lenders and banks. The Manager said although City staff is coordinating a lot of the demolition activity, for which an Administrative Fee is received, it is an ACLB project; the funds for which run through the County, not the City. The program offers little flexibility. The President encouraged property owners whose property is located next to a vacant and overgrown or a blighted structure, which has been identified as being delinquent on taxes for a significant period of time, to be sure to contact the City's Planning & Community Development Department at 992-7118, or Ms. Harvey at the ACLB and express interest in the property. The Manager said while encouragement is given to report properties or express interest in procuring them, they are tax foreclosures and the process to secure them is a long one. They have to go through two sheriff's sales before offered to the ACLB or the City of Ashtabula land banks. The ACLB has a 'side lot' program to turn the properties over and get them back onto the tax rolls and into the hands of people who desire to acquire them. The Manager said unless taxes on ACLB properties are delinquent for over five (5) years, they do not qualify to go into the tax foreclosure process. He said sometimes it has taken the ACLB up to nine months to acquire a property. He said ACLB's focus, at present, are those properties which have been on the NIP grant application demolition list. Properties which ACLB can quickly process, but are not presently on their list, will be considered if they are notified of them.

The Ward 4 Councilor asked if the City's list of properties were submitted for demolition in any specific order. The Manager said many of them were on other demolition program lists; such as, Neighborhood Stabilization Program and Moving Ohio Forward.

The structures are categorized by their previous 'list' status, location, size, amount of asbestos on sight, and those we can get our hands on the quickest and get razed the fastest because the ACLB has to pay liability insurance as long as they own the properties.

The Ward 4 Councilor asked if there is a timeline for the properties to be razed. The Manager said all the properties have to be razed by December 2015 or shortly into the spring of 2016.

The Ward 2 Councilor reported Ms. Elke Wellman, a Grove Drive resident, told him that last year a house was razed on her street but the grass has not been cut nor the property leveled off. The Manager said the City was notified about this, and that it was an "owner-ordered" demo that went through the City Solicitor's office. He believes the City's inspector has been in touch with the property owner, but will double check.

CITY SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Grass and Yard Waste Placed in City Streets: The City Solicitor reported there is a criminal ordinance prohibiting the placement of grass and yard waste in City streets. On a first offense, it is a minor misdemeanor which carries a maximum fine of \$150.00. If it continues the penalties become more serious and there is the potential for a 30 day jail sentence. He said his office has prosecuted persons for blowing grass clippings and leaves into the street. The Solicitor said, "It's not permitted. The street is not there for you to dispose of your yard waste."

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Legislation Request: AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS IN THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL CAPITAL FUND FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF ASHTABULA, STATE OF OHIO, FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2015. Mr. Pugliese moved Mrs. Cook seconded to grant the Finance Director's request; motion CARRIED.

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS and COMMUNICATIONS

Community/Economic Development/Parks & Recreation (Mrs. Misener/Mr. McClure)

The Chair announced there to be no committee report and the stated the following.

Meeting Announcements: The Committee is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, July 14, at 4:00 p.m. Legislation regarding donation clothing bin regulations and zoning fee changes and additions will be reviewed.

Molded Fiberglass Job Fair Follow up: The Chair followed up with MFG to determine the outcome of their recent job fair. She was told that over 200 applications were received, that they are slowly going through them, and not all the positions have been filled, but that they are working on it.

Letter of Support: The Chair reported the Clerk of Council, on behalf of the City Council and City Manager, drafted a letter of support for the Cornelius Park Fountain Restoration Project. At the request of the Chair, the President read the following letter that was signed by the Council and Manager and issued:

*Mr. Larry Fargo, Chair
ADDA Ad Hoc Committee
Cornelius Park Fountain Restoration & Improvement
998 Stevenson Road
Ashtabula, OH 44004*

Dear Mr. Fargo:

The Ashtabula City Council and City Manager James Timonere hereby lend their support to the Restoration and Improvement Project of the fountain located in Lance Cpl Kevin M. Cornelius Memorial Park (formerly North Park). The fountain has been a community attraction for years. Yes, it fell on hard times, but is now on its way to being restored to its intended appeal, beauty, and charm.

Larry, we especially thank you for volunteering to take on the role of Project Chair. We thank Mr. Darrell E. Hamilton for his unwavering passion for and commitment to the Park and its history and for volunteering to provide the fountains history for display at the park. And, to the Ashtabula Downtown Development Association for volunteering to act as the Project's fiscal agent

It's times like these when we can see our Mission Statement in action:

*OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND PARTNER WITH OUR CITIZENS,
BUSINESSES AND NEIGHBORS TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL WHO
LIVE IN AND VISIT ASHTABULA*

YOU HAVE OUR SUPPORT!

Parks & Recreation: The Parks & Recreation Board is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, July 14, at 6:30 p.m., at Walnut Beach.

Finance and Personnel - (Mr. Ducro IV/Mr. Balog)

A City Council work session will replace the committee's July meeting.

Public Works/Utilities/Schools – (Mr. McClure/Mr. Pugliese)

The President announced the committee's next meeting specifics have yet to be determined.

Safety Forces – (Mr. Balog/Mrs. Misener)

Legislation Request: On behalf of the Committee, the President moved that the City Solicitor to prepare an ordinance addressing facsimile of firearms; Mr. Pugliese seconded; motion CARRIED.

Meeting Announcement: The Committee is scheduled to meet on Monday, August 24, at 4:00 p.m.

Work Session

A Work Session has been scheduled for Monday, July 13, at 5:15 p.m., to discuss City income tax renewal, sewer rate adjustments, and proposed capital charge fee for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. This session is open to the public.

Special Meeting

A Special Meeting will be scheduled for Monday, July 13, at 5:00 p.m., to address this evening's legislation agenda due to this evening's absence of three members of Council.

FORMAL LEGISLATION REQUESTS - None

PUBLIC DISCUSSION (Regular Agenda Legislation Only) - None

CONSENT AGENDA DISPOSAL - None

LEGISLATION READING - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS - None

MISCELLANEOUS

GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Mrs. Octavia Yates, 508 Lake Avenue: provided the audience with information on a project she founded titled "Gemstone Project". It is G. O. Community Development's newest project, located on their second floor at 3703 Station Avenue. It offers mentorship, life skills groups, community outreach and resources. The activities are funded by donations and grants, and seek to provide resources to the community not yet available (e.g., books for school and job uniforms). If there is a need and it is not known if G.O. or Gemstone is able help, just ask and they will try their best to assist. The target groups are teens and young male and female adult populations ages 13-35. Beginning on Monday, July 13, Gemstone's office will be open from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. On Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m., for individuals who may have specific needs that require an appointment.

Mrs. Yates said a group of people work hand-in-hand with her and that, "We want to see the young and the youth in this county succeed in their dreams and aspirations. And we want to help and inspire those individuals to get where they want to go to better the city and better the community around them – for themselves and for their children." Mrs. Yates said a variety of community events will take place, they will be free to the public, and will include free food and giveaways. "The events will educate, encourage, and support individuals of this City to continue to be the best they can be." The following events have been scheduled:

Meet and Greet – Thursday, July 9, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - 3703 Station Avenue, Upstairs

- *(Community open house: see the office, meet the team, and enjoy appetizers and light refreshments)*

Beauty & Brains – Saturday, July 18, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. – 3703 Station Avenue, Upstairs:

- *(For females 18 and up, or young teen mothers: Empowerment workshop; understanding the beauty, intellect, and power that lies within a woman; and assist them in using those attributes to the best of their ability for the community and those around them)*

Saturday, August 8, Noon to 5:00 p.m. – Lance Cpl Kevin M. Cornelius Memorial Park

- *(Showcase potential that already lies in Ashtabula. Talent and persons from outside the community who have a passion for our community and want to see it grow, will also be at the event. There will be entertainment; speakers; free food, giveaways, and children's activities)*

Steven Michael K., 1804 East 46th Street: said he was present this evening to satisfy a Lake Community College class requirement regarding emergency management, which also provides 'cross training' for his public section employment. He said there is a law which says "there will be an Emergency Management Commission and an Emergency Management Administrator", but that he is unable to find reference to it on our website or in any documents. He noted that our City Charter says if such a position exists and is not filled the City Manager will be that person.

The Manager said there is an Emergency Action Plan and Manual in place, which is not published on the City's website, but which all departments have access to. He said nine times out of ten, in an emergency crisis, the Manager would appoint an authority, which would most likely be the police or fire chief, depending on the crisis. The Manager offered to point Mr. K. in the right direction after the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

RECONVENE OPEN MEETING: N/A

ACTION RESULTING FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION: N/A

CLOSING REMARKS

Meetings

The President announced the next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 20, at 7:00 p.m.; Pre-Council at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before this Council, the President asked everyone to "Remember to Keep Believing in Ashtabula", and adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: August 17, 2015

ATTESTED BY: J.P. Ducro IV
J.P. Ducro IV
President of Council

ATTESTED BY: LaVette E. Hennigan
LaVette E. Hennigan, MMC
Clerk of Council