

**ASHTABULA CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, August 18, 2014**

**Ashtabula City Municipal Building  
4717 Main Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004**

**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 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church, Park Avenue, offered the opening prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

<b>Members Present:</b>	Mr. Richard F. Balog	(Ward 1 Councilor)
	Mr. August A. Pugliese	(Ward 2 Councilor)
	Mrs. Alice T. Cook	(Ward 3 Councilor)
	Mrs. Josephine Misener	(Ward 4 Councilor)
	Mr. Kris E. Hamrick	(Ward 5 Councilor)
	Mr. Christopher J. McClure	(Vice President)
	Mr. J. P. Ducro IV	(President)

**Member(s) Absent:** None

<b>Officer(s) Present:</b>	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:** None

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

**Presentations:** None

**Executive Session:** The President announced the City Manager asked for an Executive Session to discuss Personnel/Employment/Compensation. Mrs. Cook moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to grant the City Manager's request. On the roll call to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss Personnel/Employment/Compensation: Mr. Balog, Mr. Pugliese, Mrs. Cook,

Mrs. Misener, Mr. Hamrick, Mr. McClure, Mr. Ducro IV voted yea; motion CARRIED. The President announced the dais was invited to the session.

**Reconvene Open Meeting:** At 7:24 p.m., the President announced the public portion of the meeting was reconvened.

**Action resulting from Executive Session:** The City Manager formally requested ORDINANCE NO. 2014-141 AN ORDINANCE ACKNOWLEDGING THE HIRING OF LAWRENCE J. MEANEY AS PUBLIC SERVICES SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CITY OF ASHTABULA AND APPROVING ADDITIONAL PAID VACATION LEAVE. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to grant the City Manager's request; motion CARRIED.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda is a means whereby Council is able to more efficiently conduct business by grouping like items together 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:

- July 7, 2014 Regular Meeting
- July 21, 2014 Regular Meeting
- August 4, 2014 Regular Meeting

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

### **FORMAL LEGISLATION REQUESTS**

#### ORDINANCE

2014-133 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING, IN ITS ENTIRETY, ORDINANCE NO. 2014-128, IN ORDER TO MAKE A CORRECTION TO THE CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION NUMBER.  
(References to 143.05 should be 141.10). (Clerk of Council)

#### ORDINANCE

2014-134 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING EXISTING CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 141.10, ENTITLED RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT, AND ENACTING NEW CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 141.10, ENTITLED RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT. (Clerk of Council)

#### ORDINANCE

2014-135 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING, IN ITS ENTIRETY, ORDINANCE NO. 2014-68, IN ORDER TO CORRECTLY SPECIFY THE CODIFIED ORDINANCE PARAGRAPH DESIGNATION IN CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 143.07. (Clerk of Council)

ORDINANCE

2014-136 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING, IN ITS ENTIRETY, ORDINANCE NO. 2014-69, IN ORDER TO CORRECTLY SPECIFY THE CODIFIED ORDINANCE PARAGRAPH DESIGNATION IN CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 143.07. (Clerk of Council)

ORDINANCE

2014-137 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 143.07(a) AND ENACTING NEW SECTION 143.07(a) FOR THE PURPOSE OF INCORPORATING INTO THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER ABOLISHING THE POSITIONS OF CITY AUDITOR & TREASURER AND CREATING THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE.  
(Clerk of Council)

Mr. Balog moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to formally present the preceding legislation. The President explained the above ordinance reference updates to the Codified Ordinances of the City of Ashtabula, in order to remove the titles of City Auditor and City Treasurer and replace it with Finance Director. The motion CARRIED.

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION (Consent Agenda Legislation Only) – None**

**LEGISLATION READING**

ORDINANCE

2014-133 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING, IN ITS ENTIRETY, ORDINANCE NO. 2014-128, IN ORDER TO MAKE A CORRECTION TO THE CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION NUMBER. (References to 143.05 should be 141.10). (Clerk of Council)

ORDINANCE

2014-134 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING EXISTING CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 141.10, ENTITLED RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT, AND ENACTING NEW CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 141.10, ENTITLED RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT.  
(Clerk of Council)

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RESOLUTION

2014-138 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO PREPARE AND FILE AN APPLICATION FOR AN OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES NATUREWORKS PUBLIC RECREATION GRANT. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE

2014-139 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10,650 WITH WILKINSON PAVING COMPANY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING PAVING MATERIALS AND SERVICES ON GLADDING AVENUE. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE

2014-140 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AMENDMENT TO A RECREATION HARBOR EVALUATION GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF WATERCRAFT. (City Manager)

Mr. Balog moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to waive the reading of the above Consent Agenda Legislation; motion CARRIED. Mr. Balog moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to waive the Charter Requirement of two readings of the above Consent Agenda Legislation. For the benefit of persons new to the audience, the Council President explained the Consent Agenda process. He explained that Consent Agenda items are of a general or common nature, and do not require extensive debate or discussion. On the roll call to waive the Charter Requirement of two readings: Mr. Balog, Mr. Pugliese, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Misener, Mr. Hamrick, Mr. McClure, Mr. Ducro IV voted yea; motion CARRIED. On the roll call to adopt the above Consent Agenda Legislation: Mr. Balog, Mr. Pugliese, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Misener, Mr. Hamrick, Mr. McClure, Mr. Ducro IV voted yea; motion CARRIED.

(END OF CONSENT AGENDA)

## REGULAR AGENDA

### READING AND DISPOSAL OF MEETING MINUTES - None

### CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

#### **Ashtabula River Dredging Project – Grant Amendment**

The City Manager reported his request for an ordinance to amend the original Recreation Harbor Evaluation Grant Agreement dated February 8, 2013, to extend the completion of the work to June 30, 2015; and to increase the grant amount to \$97,000.00, was presented and passed during the Consent Agenda portion of this meeting. He provided the following Project explanation: "The City asked for an amendment for the grant previously received. The project is near Brockway Marina. There was additional material we believed needed to be removed, so we returned to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to see if they would amend the original contract. The initial amount of \$140,000 was received from ODNR, along with matches from the Civic Development Corporation (CDC), County Port Authority, City Port Authority, Mr. Brockway (Brockway Marina), and Mr. Nelson (ARU Marina). Additional funding was secured. However when the project resumed, shale was encountered in the bottom of the river. The shale was lifting the barge out of the water, so deep dredging was inhibited. It ended up only costing another \$9,000. ODNR will provide an additional \$4,500 to \$4,700 and Mr. Brockway will pay the balance. If we are going to finish the project all the way up to the bridge, some things will have to be done differently. It is believed that enough material has been removed, and has made a significant difference at Brockway Marina and at ARU. The Manager thanked everyone involved in the Project, including State Representative John Patterson, who helped maneuver through Columbus. He said this agreement will close out the project, at which time the financiers would be reimbursed from the State.

#### **GPD Group – Hulbert Avenue Rehabilitation Project**

The City Manager requested an ordinance to enter into an agreement with GPD Group of 100 Federal Plaza East, Suite 200 Youngstown, OH 44503 for the purpose of providing design engineering and construction administration for the Hulbert Avenue Rehab Project in the amount not to exceed \$49,360.00. Funding for this expenditure will be taken from Account Number 290-144-5554. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to grant the City Manager's request. The President asked the Manager to tell why the engineering amount on this project is so large. The Manager said this is the medina-stone bricked road (north side only). Whether to return to medina-stone was debated, but it was determined it would put the Project close to one million dollars. Because this is not an option, Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) with the Historic Preservation Society of Ohio were entered to allow us to lay the same color brick as was laid on Goodwill Drive. Whatever medina-stone may be salvaged from the road will be used to install crosswalks in the Harbor areas as long as we remain within the Project cost. This grant is for critical infrastructure purposes, as part of the Downtown Revitalization Grant received for revitalization projects in the Harbor area.

This rehabilitation project is coming in at about \$361,000, for two blocks of road. The engineering cost includes monitoring. The motion CARRIED.

### **Sanitary Sewer Repair – Prospect Road**

The City Manager requested an ordinance to enter into an agreement with Roto-Rooter located in Ashtabula, for the replacement of a sanitary sewer lateral on Prospect Road (in front of Arby's) in the amount not to exceed \$11,985.00. Funding for this expenditure will be taken from Account Number 503-150-5500, titled Capital Improvements. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded, to grant the City Manager's request; motion CARRIED.

### **CONCERNS RE: SOME ACTIVITY IN COMMUNITY**

The Manager said nowadays social media drives a lot of activity and conversations. He said a lot of what has been posted about our community has been created from a lot of misinformation and community uneasiness. He said while local officials do not want residents or visitors to feel uneasy, it goes with the times. He cited the following misinformation posted on social media, "There were multiple drive-by shootings last night on Station Avenue, West 47<sup>th</sup> Street & Fern Avenue, West Avenue and a couple other streets. See, retaliation does not call the police and warn them they are on their way to do a drive-by. Point proven, rumors were correct." The Manager said research that was conducted showed the incident was actually a domestic altercation, in which a person went outside and fired a weapon into the air. He then got into his vehicle, arrived at another location and did the same thing. He said there have been quite a few comments about the presence of extra law enforcement patrols from multiple agencies in town, and that he is happy it is being noticed. The increased police presence is an operation called "Operation Summer Crush". This has been in the works since late 2013. It's a joint effort of Ohio State Highway Patrol, U.S. Marshalls, the Ohio Investigative Unit, Violent Fugitive Task Force, Ashtabula County Sheriff's, and Ashtabula City Police. The last planning meeting occurred on July 10, which was before the West 47<sup>th</sup> Street shooting. The increased police presence is not a result of the recent violent incident, but rather a well planned enforcement effort by many area agencies, which began when our community needed it the most. The City Manager said it is ironic that many of the people noticing the increased presence of law enforcement agencies, and who are praising their efforts, are the very same people who, during the Ashtabula Police Levy campaign to put more officers on the street, stated repeatedly that extra officers would do nothing to deter criminal activity. "The increased presence has been noticeable and effective." In January, when the City of Ashtabula has five to seven officers on the road during each shift, the community will witness the same presence. The Manager said a point that was repeated during the levy campaign was that three officers on the road are not enough for a city of our size, with the issues we face. "We are very appreciative of those who voted in favor of the levy, and realized the same." He asked that thanks be given to our Police Department, and the agencies mentioned, for the added protection. The Manager asked that suspicious activity or hearsay be reported to the Police Department not social media, so the City is informed, and so officers can respond, without inciting panic. The Manager said if the community is in danger or if there is an immediate threat to them, they will be notified through reversed 9-1-1, social media, or any other viable means.

He asked that the Police Department Non-Emergency number or 9-1-1 be used.

**Questions/Comments for City Manager**

**Street Lights:** The Ward 2 Councilor reported street lights along Collins Boulevard are out.

**CITY SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

The City Solicitor said he echoed some of the City Manager's sentiments, and stated the following: "Tragically, Devante McCurdy was shot and killed shortly after midnight on July 25, in our City, by shots fired shortly before midnight on July 24. On August 14, the person we, (and I will say I), firmly believe who fired the shots that killed him, was bound over to the grand jury for further proceedings. That's under three weeks. The person was identified, apprehended, charged, and a preliminary hearing was held that resulted in the case being sent to the court that will ultimately dispose of it. The quick turnaround is due to excellent and an enormous amount of work on the part of the Ashtabula Police Division." The Solicitor thanked and recognized the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Marshall service, and the Ashtabula County Sheriff's Department for their significant assistance in the investigation and prosecution, thus far. He said while the case is far from over, he wants everyone to recognize there is every reason to be hopeful and pleased we have the kind of police protection where quick results are possible. He reiterated the Manager's request that residents not hesitate to report what is going on in neighborhoods, so the City may know and respond appropriately.

**Operation Summer Crush:** The Manager reported that during Operation Summer Crust, the U.S. Marshalls acquired funding to pay the overtime for our police officers to participate. This shows the type of collaboration we can have with other agencies.

**Police Department Phone Numbers:** The President announced that in conjunction with the City Manager and City Solicitor's statements, he wanted to make sure the Police Division phone numbers were provided: Emergency (9-1-1), Non-emergency (992-7172), and Tip Line (992-7126).

**FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Property Tax Revenue:** The Finance Director reported the second half property tax revenue was received from the County Auditor. It is \$40,000 less than projected, due to a reimbursement the County Auditor made to a corporation, by subtracting it from our revenues. She will present a revised budget and year end estimates at September's Finance & Personnel Committee meeting.

**2015 Budget:** The Finance Director reported she expects to receive department budget requests this week. They will be submitted to the City Manager for review before being submitted to City Council.

### **Legislation Request**

**Depository:** The Finance Director reported when the former City Treasurer retired, Huntington Bank signature cards were updated with her and the City Manager as signers. She reported the bank requests an update to the depository agreement legislation, which is needed every time our bank depository is renewed. The Finance Director requested the repeal of Ordinance No. 2010-101, designating Huntington Bank as the approved depository for the City, and the enactment of a new ordinance designating Huntington Bank as the City's depository, with updates signatures. Mr. Balog moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to grant the Finance Director's request. The Finance Director said Huntington Bank was chosen through a bid process, which will take place again in 2015. The motion CARRIED.

**Supplemental Appropriations:** The Finance Director requested a supplemental appropriations ordinance for Court Special Projects, Parks & Recreation, Permanent Improvements, and Police Operating. Mr. Balog moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to grant the Finance Director's request; motion CARRIED.

**New Employee:** The Finance Director reported Mr. Todd Shimko is the City's new part-time Finance Clerk.

### **CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS and COMMUNICATIONS**

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

The Chair read RESOLUTION NO. 2006-126 A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER AS NATIONAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTION RECOVERY MONTH.

The Chair reported on the Committee's Monday, August 11 meeting, as follows:

**Ashtabula County Board of Realtors (ACBR) re: Housing:** The Committee had a productive conversation with ACBR representatives from Harbor Realty, Asa Cox Realty and Berkshire Hathaway (formerly Prudential Realty), regarding the City's housing stock, and the real estate market, in general. Points of discussion were: (CC – Committee; C – Chair; R – Realtors)

- R: There is a slight increase in sale prices in the COA, however, the Cities of Geneva and Conneaut, and surrounding townships are realizing more real estate sales and at higher prices than the City of Ashtabula (COA);
- R: They believe services the COA provides are and can be an attractive selling point;
- R: "Perception" is not our (COA's) friend; what a person perceives is what is real and true to them, whether actually real or true. So our resident's negative attitudes about their community are what they will portray to the general public and visitors.
- C: Such portrayals are hard to erase. We have to work to change this behavior, and she believes we have begun the process of doing so;
- \* Realtors were provided with the chart of COA projects;



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- \* The important of 'green space' was emphasized;
- \* Financing our recovery is a challenge;
- \* The activity of investors purchasing houses, fixing them up and reselling them, is up;
- \* Financial institutions do not want to and are not taking possession of houses after foreclosure notices are issued. For this very reason, the City Manager said he has told people to remain in their home until law enforcement comes knocking. If someone is living in the structure there is more of a chance it will be maintained, rather than going to ruin because no one is taking care of them;
- \* Rentals vs. owner occupied were discussed. Presently the COA has 9,000 rental units and 53% of our dwellings are owner occupied (2012 US Census). It is important that we attract home buyers; and
- \* Our recovery is incumbent upon a healthy housing stock, coupled with groups getting involved, the COA weeding out the worst of houses and enforcing the housing laws; and
- \* Initiatives such as citywide paving and increased police protection will go a long way to a better looking community.

**Parks & Recreation Board (Board):** The Chair reported the Board met on August 12, and discussed the following:

**Clifford Kadon Presidential Park Playground Equipment:** They discussed the installation of playground equipment at Clifford Kadon Presidential Park; the need for funds; and the need to contact Mr. Lester to secure a tentative time to set up and coordinate COA employees and volunteers to get the equipment installed. The bids for the playground mulch have been received.

**Peace Stone Installation:** The Board unanimously approved the location for the placement of the peace stone in South Park. The Manager will have City crews remove the mount the stone was originally going to be placed upon, and fill the large hole. ADDA will be responsible for the creation and installation of the new base for the stone, and the flower plantings and the new mount; both of which will be located where the first base was placed.

**Honoring Karen Flack:** The Women's Republican Party would like to plant a tree (Cherry Blossom or Dogwood), on October 4, in South Park in honor of Mrs. Karen Flack, a community advocate who spent many hours and her personnel funds taking care of South Park. Karen passed away in April. The Chair reported the City Manager has agreed to take care of the OUPS scheduling.

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**City Projects:** The Manager provided the Committee with updates on the chart of City projects.

**“Battle for Ashtabula’s Future” Initiative:** Gazette Reporter Zach Dzurick briefly outlined his initiative titled, “Battle for Ashtabula’s Future. The reason he embarked on the initiative is because when he began covering the county for the Gazette, he began speaking with public officials. They believed the county’s biggest problem was its citizens and the negative perception they have of their county. He said tourist spent time coming to our county, and when he moved to the county he immediately saw what the county has to offer. However, he was met with countless negative comments, from citizens, about their community. They even went as far as asking him why he was here and told him he should spend his money somewhere else. It puzzled him and made him want to “Battle for Ashtabula’s Future”, because if the residents do not see the good then the county’s comeback will be an uphill battle. He told the committee that tourists love Ashtabula County, but residents need to value what they have and become advocates for the County. So, as an outsider, he felt it necessary to highlight the value and good in Ashtabula County, with the hope that its citizens will too. He told the committee that over the next several weeks, the Gazette Newspaper will run a series of articles about Ashtabula County strengths, and will explore the county’s opportunities for enhancement. The articles will begin with a focus on five key areas: Access to Healthcare, Quality Education for All, Sustainable Energy and Healthy Environment, Infrastructure Upgrades, and Jobs with Living Wages for Working People. Those topics will just be the start. The series will be conversation starter for the entire county.

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

The Chair announced the committee did not meet in August; but will meet again on Friday, September 12, at 8:00 a.m., in the Municipal Building 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room.

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

The Chair announced the committee will meet on Friday, September 5, at 8:00 a.m., in the Municipal Building 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room.

**Questions and Comments for the Committee**

**Utility Pole Wires:** The Ward 2 Councilor reported seeing wires either hanging from or wrapped around several utility poles. The City Manager said after FirstEnergy performed a mass pole replacement, Time Warner Cable and Windstream telephone were suppose to remove their wires from the old poles. The last company to remove their wires is responsible for removing the old pole.

FirstEnergy did not provide ample notice to TWC and Windstream; therefore they have not been able to schedule the removal of their wires, and subsequently the old poles. The Manager said he is scheduled to meet with TWC and Windstream about this very thing. He will report his findings to the committee.

**Invitation to New Public Services Superintendent (PSS):** The Chair invited new PSS Lawrence Meaney to the committee's next meeting, if his schedule permits.

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

The Chair announced the committee will meet on Monday, September 22, at 4:00 p.m. He reported the committee's monthly meeting has been changed from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday at 8:00 a.m., to the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, at 4:00 p.m.

**Work Session** – No Session/No Report

**FORMAL LEGISLATION REQUESTS** - None

**PUBLIC COMMENT** (Regular Agenda Legislation Only) – None

**LEGISLATION READING**

The Clerk of Council presented the following legislation for consideration:

**ORDINANCE NO. 2014-141 AN ORDINANCE ACKNOWLEDGING THE HIRING OF LAWRENCE J. MEANEY AS PUBLIC SERVICES SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CITY OF ASHTABULA AND APPROVING ADDITIONAL PAID VACATION LEAVE**, was presented. Mr. Balog moved, Mr. McClure seconded to waive the reading of the ordinance; motion CARRIED. Mr. Balog moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to waive the Charter requirement of two readings. On the roll call to waive the Charter requirement of two readings: Mr. Balog, Mr. Pugliese, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Misener, Mr. Hamrick, Mr. McClure, Mr. Ducro IV voted yea; motion CARRIED. On the roll call to adopt the ordinance: Mr. Balog, Mr. Pugliese, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Misener, Mr. Hamrick, Mr. McClure, Mr. Ducro IV voted yea; motion CARRIED.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Board Appointments:** The President announced the appointments of Mr. David Payne and Ms. Julene Schwarz to the City's Architectural Restoration Review Board, for three year terms, commencing today. There were no objections to the appointments.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

**Stop Violence Rally:** The President reported this afternoon he attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting in a series of planning meetings for a rally targeted at stopping violence in our community. The event is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 20, beginning at 11:00 a.m. or Noon. They plan to have public service vendors, activities, music, and refreshments. It promises to be a positive and peaceful event. The President said he should have more to report at the September 2 Regular Council meeting.

**Ward Cleanups:** The President asked Ward Councilors to coordinate a community/neighborhood clean up event in their respective wards.

**Citizen Jeff Nash:** The President reported meeting with Mr. Jeff Nash, a resident who lives in the 40<sup>th</sup> block of West Avenue. They drove the neighborhood and discussed items in need attention. He said Mr. Nash is a citizen who has put his 'money where his mouth is'. He said Mr. Nash took it upon himself to edge the lawn of an entire street in his neighborhood, what a difference it made. The President said he believes Mr. Nash and others who are doing this type of community service deserve to be recognized.

### **GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

**Mr. Donte Conard, 725 West 33rd Street (off Station Avenue):** voiced much concern with high grass and the six (6) abandon houses on his short block. He believes the houses pose a potential danger to the children because they are not boarded up. His fear is a child will enter one of the structures, fall through a whole, and never be found. He said a family with several kids moved across the street from him a few months ago. He said boards are constantly being removed from boarded up structures. He reported slate is falling off the roof next door to him, (a piece of which came through his window and could have harmed his 7 year old child, doors open), there are numerous rodents, dimed street lights due to a bird's nest, and illegal activity on the dead end portion of his street. Mr. Conard said he has lived on his street two years, has never seen a dead-end sign, and that the dead-end invites unwelcomed activity. He said he and his neighbors are trying to clean up their properties, and would like some help. Mr. Conard reports receiving the runaround regarding who owns the abandoned structures.

The Manager said the abandoned structures Mr. Conard references are some of our 'zombie' homes, in that no one is taking ownership. Mr. Conard showed photos of the unkept properties. He said he has made the Planning & Community Development Department (PC D) aware of the situation.

The Manager said he would follow up with the department.

The Vice President asked if the homes are on the City's demolition list. The Manager said the demo list no longer exists. He reported PCD applied for 2.8 million dollars to demo 111 or 113 structures through the Neighborhood Initiative Program (N.I.P.) grant. PCD applied for the grant on behalf of the County of Ashtabula, and have not yet received a response.

The Manager said he is sure the City has some information on the unsecured structures Mr. Conard speaks of. He said people remove boards from the secured structures; and that he will do his best to get them secured again.

The Ward 4 Councilor asked the City Manager if he would have a dead end sign posted. The Manager responded yes. The Councilor then asked if the City could mow the lawn of the structure next door to Mr. Conard's home in an effort to reduce the rodents. It was suggested that the Health Department could bate for rats. The Manager said he would have to see where the houses fall on the list and have Code Enforcer John Artuso visit the neighborhood.

Regarding the high grass, the Manager said it has to go through the normal notification channels before it can be cut. Mr. Conard said he has been trying to keep the grass cut, but there is so much of it, it is challenging. He said there are also overgrown trees to contend with.

Mr. Conard said he contacted the Health Department about the rodents and was told the Environmental Director, Terri Collett, went through the property today.

The President told Mr. Conard he appreciates him coming tonight.

**Pastor Doug Wright, 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church, Park Avenue:** issued a reminder to motorists that students return to school next week; and asked everyone to be careful.

**Mr. Nik Tressler, 202 West 58th Street:** commented that rodents are not the result of high grass; but trash. He said high grass is not harmful to humans; and that his knowledge of this comes from growing up on a farm.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None

**RECONVENE OPEN MEETING:** N/A

**ACTION RESULTING FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION:** N/A

**CLOSING REMARKS**

**Next Meeting:** The President announced the next Regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 2, at 7:00 p.m.; Pre-Council at 6:00 p.m. The Labor Day holiday will be observed on Monday, September 1.

**Tag Line:** The President reminded citizens to “Remember to Keep Believing in Ashtabula!”

**Wine & Walleye Festival (Bridge Street):** The Manager issued a reminder that the Festival is scheduled for this weekend (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday).

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. McClure seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: **September 2, 2014**

ATTESTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
**J.P. Ducro IV**  
**President of Council**

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