

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

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, January 5, 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:

Mr. Kris E. Hamrick	(Ward 5 Councilor)
Mr. August A. Pugliese	(Ward 2 Councilor)
Mrs. Alice T. Cook	(Ward 3 Councilor)
Mrs. Josephine Misener	(Ward 4 Councilor)
Mr. Christopher J. McClure	(Vice President)
Mr. J. P. Ducro IV	(President)

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: Mr. Richard F. Balog (Ward 1 Councilor)

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 Ward 1 Councilor from this meeting; motion CARRIED.

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

PRESENTATIONS: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

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:

- * December 1, 2014 Public Hearing
- * December 15, 2014 Regular 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

The Clerk of Council presented the following legislation for City Council's consideration:

ORDINANCE

2015-03 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 TO CONTRACT WITH PERRAM ELECTRIC, INC., FOR DELETION OF SERVICES AND MATERIALS IN THE CITY TRAFFIC SIGNALIZATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE

2015-06 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING, IN ITS ENTIRETY, CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 174.05, ENTITLED "MEETINGS; RULES; RECORDS; QUORUM," FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENACTING AN AMENDED VERSION TO ASSIST THE OPERATIONS OF THE CITY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD. (Clerk of Council)

ORDINANCE

2015-07 AN ORDINANCE ENACTING NEW CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 174.05, ENTITLED "MEETINGS; RULES; RECORDS; QUORUM" TO ASSIST THE OPERATIONS OF THE CITY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD. (Clerk of Council)

Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to waive the reading of the above Consent Agenda Legislation; motion CARRIED. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to waive the Charter Requirement of two readings of the above Consent Agenda Legislation. On the roll call to waive the Charter Requirement of two readings: Mr. Hamrick, Mr. Pugliese, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Misener, Mr. McClure, Mr. Ducro IV voted yea; motion CARRIED. On the roll call to adopt the above Consent Agenda Legislation: Mr. Hamrick, Mr. Pugliese, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Misener, 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

Water Pollution Control Loan Fund – Application

The City Manager requested a resolution for authorization to apply for a loan application and execute documents through the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) for a Water Pollution Control Loan. This funding will be utilized to complete the necessary projects to maintain compliance with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA). Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to grant the City Manager's request; motion CARRIED.

Ashtabula County Public Defender Agreement

The City Manager requested an ordinance to enter into an agreement with the Ashtabula County Public Defender Commission and the City of Ashtabula in the amount not to exceed \$17,000 for indigent legal services for the year 2015. Funding for this expenditure will be taken from the City of Ashtabula General Fund. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to grant the City Manager's request; motion CARRIED.

Ashtabula County Public Transit Services Operation Center

The City Manager requested an ordinance to enter into a one year agreement with the Ashtabula County Commissioners for the purpose of providing a lease agreement for the transit facility to provide city/county wide transportation services for 2015. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to grant the City Manager's request; motion CARRIED.

Ashtabula County Public Transit Services

The City Manager requested an ordinance to enter into a one year agreement with the Ashtabula County Commissioners for the purpose of providing a transit service for city/county wide transportation for 2015, in the amount not to exceed \$30,000.00. Funding for this expenditure will be taken from the City of Ashtabula General Fund. The President said Council believes this service is a valuable asset to our community. He encouraged the other communities who use the service to consider helping fund the program. The Vice President concurred. He noted that during this evening's Pre-Council discussion Councilor Pugliese reported that many years ago A.C.T.S. (Ashtabula County Transportation Service) began as the City of Ashtabula busing. It now serves a far greater area than the City - spanning south, east and west, with the concentration of services in the City of Ashtabula. He reported the Manager informed Council that the City of Ashtabula is the only Ashtabula County community financially contributing towards these services. We also provide in-kind services to the facility. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to grant the City Manager's request; motion CARRIED.

GPD Group – Water Pollution Control Digester Project Engineering Design

The City Manager requested an ordinance to enter into an agreement with GPD Group in the amount not to exceed \$183,000 for the purpose of providing engineering design services for the Digester Project at the Water Pollution Control Plant (WPC). Funds for this expenditure will be taken from the WPC Capital fund. This work is in accordance with an Ohio EPA finding. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to grant the City Manager’s request; motion CARRIED.

GPD Group – Water Pollution Control Primary Tank Rehabilitation Engineering Design

The City Manager requested an ordinance to enter into an agreement with GPD Group in the amount not to exceed \$223,000 for the purpose of providing engineering design services for the Primary Tank Rehabilitation for the Water Pollution Control Plant (WPC). Funds for this expenditure will be taken from the WPC Capital fund. This work is in accordance with an Ohio EPA finding. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to grant the City Manager’s request; motion CARRIED.

GPD Group – Water Pollution Control Project Construction Administration and Inspection

The City Manager requested an ordinance to enter into an agreement with GPD Group in the amount not to exceed \$225,000 for the purpose of providing engineering design services for the Construction Administration and Inspection for projects at the Water Pollution Control Plant (WPC). Funds for this expenditure will be taken from the WPC Capital fund. This work is in accordance with an Ohio EPA finding. The City Manager elaborated on all three GPD requests. The first request on his Manager’s Report is the loan that would pay for these projects. The OEPA requires these three GPD contracts be in place in order to make the loan application. The projects cannot go forward unless the loan is granted. The Manager reported the cost noted in each ordinance represents about 10% of the total project cost of \$8 million. The Ward 4 Councilor noted that if the loan is not granted GPD does not get paid. The Ward 5 Councilor asked from where the funds will come to repay the loan. The Manager said while this has been discussed in City Council’s Finance & Personnel Committee, “Council will have to take some serious actions towards this. It will either have to come in the form of a rate increase (*sewer*), which I’m not in favor of. What I am in favor of is for... right now we have a charge for the EQ Basin (*Equalization Basin*) on the (*sewer*) bills, which is between \$3 and \$4. I believe that that fee should become a capital improvement fee, and kept on as that. These funds will cover the loan costs. I think if you increase the rates it’s not as evenly distributed and some of our larger industries would be hit much harder than what it is if it’s evenly distributed across the board. I know that people wanted that EQ Basin fee off of there. Unfortunately we have a lot of work that needs to be done down at the plant that we have to get done by orders from the Ohio EPA. This is one way to do it without incurring some of the costs that you’ve seen in other communications. In Akron, they’ve had about a 68% increase in one year on their sewer bill. We’re nowhere near that, thank God. Akron’s was because of findings as well. You’re seeing that happen in Cleveland and other places. We do have a lot of work to do down there, but the time that the EQ Basin fee (when the project is paid off) will be about the same time we would have to start having to pay for this loan.

So, that is going to be my suggestion to the Finance committee". The EQ Basin will be paid off in 2016. The Vice President/Public Works/Utilities/Schools Committee Chair noted, there are only two ways to fund the OEPA finding. He suggested there is a danger in having the EQ Basin fee become a Capital Improvement fee, because of the promises made when the fee was enacted. He stressed the importance of having the discussion in committee. He asked if these projects will get us through a certain timeframe, or will they bring the plant where it needs to be. The City Manager responded these are project to address systems that are either barely working or not working at all. The large price tags represent total system rebuilds. Because 'redundancy' at the plant, meaning there are multiple pieces of the same equipment, the plant has remained operable. For a myriad of reasons, "patch work repairs" have been performed, and now the systems have to be rehabilitated from the ground up. The Manager said these projects will go a long way in fixing the plant. He said the more he learns about water pollution plants, he realizes a million dollars can be dropped into the plant capital improvements and still there is still a long way to go. He said they take a lot of abuse and wear-and-tear, especially if funds are limited. He said the current staff has a much better handle on plant maintenance and is doing a great job. The Vice President said a sewer rate increase may be the way to go to address a system that will be maintained forever; verses someone on a fixed income having to pay the flat EQ Basin rate, when promised it would cease. The City Manager said essentially the two funding options equal the same dollar amount. The City Solicitor reported he and the City Manager have spoken about the need for a notice to be issued to the Ashtabula County Commissioners of any sewer rate adjustments due to the City/County Sewer Agreement. He said they have a period to review and comment. If they vote to challenge the rate there will be a dispute resolution process to go through. Keeping the EQ Basin rate has to be adjusted in accordance with the same agreement, but is less involved. The President agreed the conversation should take place in committee. He would also like the Finance Director to provide detailed numbers on both options, (e.g., loan repayment costs, timelines, % of rate increase, the dollar amount it equates to and the estimated revenue, how long the 'capital improvement fee' would need to remain), and any other information the committee could consider in order to make an informed decision. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to grant the City Manager's request; motion CARRIED.

Health District Licensing Council Appointment

The City Manager requested the appointment of Mr. Trevor Sprague from the Ashtabula YMCA to serve on the Health District Licensing Council for the Pools & Spa Program effective immediately, for a term to end on February 4, 2017. Mr. McClure moved, Mr. Hamrick seconded to grant the City Manager's request; motion CARRIED.

Formal Legislation Requests

The City Manager formally requested the following legislation prior to City Council's vote:

ORDINANCE NO. 2015-01 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING, IN ITS ENTIRETY, ORDINANCE NO. 2014-158 IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE COMPENSATION OF THE SCHEDULEING CLERK IN THE ASHTABULA MUNICIPAL COURT AS REQUIRED BY THE INCREASE IN OHIO'S MINIMUM WAGE,

AND TO ADD THE POSITION OF POLICE OFFICER IN TRAINING, AS REQUESTED BY THE CITY MANAGER, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2015. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Hamrick seconded, to grant the City Manager's request. At the request of the President the Manager explained the purpose for the 'Police Office in Training' position. He reported 5 police entrance positions have been offered, as promised when placing the Police Levy on the May 2014 primary ballot. Two (2) dispatchers have been hired. He reported one of the top ranking civil service test takers has not been through the police academy. He said in the past the City hired an officer, at full-time wage and also paid for them to go through the police academy while receiving full benefits and compensation. The Manager said he did not feel it was in the City's best interest to do the same with levy monies. Therefore the position of "Police Officer in Training" is being created at a pay rate of \$10.00 per hour. Because the person scheduled to go through the four month academy program is a U.S. Veteran, the G.I. Bill will cover his academy costs. He said upon his academy completion, he will be hired, with us, full-time. The President asked if the union was consulted; the Manager responded yes. The motion CARRIED.

ORDINANCE NO. 2015-02, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING COMPENSATION, SALARIES AND WAGES TO ALL EMPLOYEES OF THE CITY OF ASHTABULA, OHIO. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Hamrick seconded, to grant the City Manager's request; motion CARRIED.

The City Manager requested ORDINANCE NO. 2015-05, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE ASHTABULA COUNTY LAND BANK CONCERNING DEMOLITION OF VACANT AND BLIGHTED STRUCTURES, be removed from tonight's agenda. He said he will bring it back to the next Council meeting. He said there are MOU (memorandum of understanding) items the Land Bank and City of Ashtabula need to continue discussing. The Manager explained that the Ashtabula County Land Bank (ACLB) received a \$500,000 Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) grant. The City of Ashtabula offered to administer all demolition activity within the City limits, for which for which the grant would provide compensation. The administration of the grant would include contacting contractors, monitoring the demolitions, and property maintenance after the structures are razed, (e.g. mowing). Each property is granted up to \$25,000 for demolition, administration, and on-going maintenance. The Manager reported the ACLB has to own the properties for three years, which is why maintenance funds, believed to be in the amount of \$5,000, were set aside. However there is program language in the grant that permits ACLB to dispose of the property, as long as NIP guidelines are met. If the guidelines are not adhered to, and the property is sold, the proceeds have to be forwarded to the NIP. The Ward 4 Councilor asked what happens to the funds if some remain after a structure is razed. The City Manager responded, "That's a great question"? He said unfortunately these type grants are awarded, and then the rules constantly change. He said he wants to ensure all the documentation is lined up and in the right places before executing the MOU. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Hamrick seconded, to grant the City Manager's request; motion CARRIED.

Christmas Tree Disposal

The City Manager asked that all decorations be removed from live trees and that they are placed at curbside for pickup, beginning the week of January 12, weather permitting. The President asked if artificial trees would also be picked up.

The Manager said they are garbage, do not breakdown well in the landfill, may be delivered to the Transfer Station, or residents may call and make arrangements to have them picked up, for a cost.

Media Crews

The City Manager thanked Councilor Pugliese for suggesting the dais wear Ohio State University (OSU) Buckeye apparel in support of the team playing in the Monday, January 12, college football championship. A lot of media attention was in the City and County of Ashtabula when OSU's head coach, Urban Meyer, coached the Florida gators, whose team won two BCS (Bowl Championship Series) Championships. The Manager said he hopes this time around everyone would be extremely positive about our area when the media comes to town looking for the story of how Coach Meyer came from 'the downtrodden area and became the person that he is. It is true he has excelled, but Ashtabula City and County are great places, and we all need to let the media know that. It's not about being misleading; it's about knowing every municipality has had its struggles over the years. I think we've done pretty darn good with what we've had to deal with over the years. And, we have some pretty positive things going on. Those are the things to highlight when the media comes calling.

Questions/Comments for the City Manager

Artificial Christmas Tree Disposal

The President asked if artificial trees will be picked up. The City Manager said they do not breakdown well in the landfill, may be personally delivered to the Transfer Station, or residents may call and make arrangements to have them picked up for a cost.

Snow Ban

At the Ward 2 Councilor's request, the City Manager announced the City's snow ban is automatically enacted when snow fall reaches three inches. He said this means no parking on City roads, and said the ban will be enforced. He said crews are out and doing their best to keep the roads clear.

Road Salt

The City Manager reported we purchased a little over 2000 tons of salt at the beginning of the season (at last year's price). We had between 500 and 700 tons still in stock from the previous winter. One-thousand tons of it has been used already. Some townships in the immediate area are only salting intersections, or mixing their salt with sand and cinders to stretch it in areas where there are ditches for off-run. The sand cinders are not good for our waste water system. At some point we will have to use salt conservatively, however, we are in the safe zone now. He said we are making contacts to ensure we have access to salt if we run out, and are also searching for a new supplier.

Proposed Curbside Recycling Program

The President asked the Manager to provide a brief summary of the program's status. The Manager reminded everyone the City received a \$200,000 grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)/Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to establish curbside recycling. We proposed to begin in Wards 1 and 2, on a Monday route. The logistics of where the recycling material will go is being worked out, hauling agreements have not been able to be made, and we are searching for somewhere to take the material at no charge or for very minimal cost. The Manager reported recycling is no longer a commodity. There is so much recyclable material and recyclers were being paid to recycle. Now we are being charged for some recyclables. For example, we were being paid to recycle glass, now the charge is \$1,000 per week to pick it up; therefore we no longer take glass at the City's Recycling Center. The Ashtabula County Solid Waste District (ACSWD) and some 'big players' are assisting us. The grant is scheduled to be executed in July. An extension will be requested, if necessary. The Manager said the grant will allow us to purchase the equipment to outfit our current trucks in order to electronically empty the bins at curbside, and the bins themselves. He said the purchases are not be the hold up; it is determining where the material will go once it is picked up.

Waste Management (WM) picks up for Geneva and Jefferson, holds it, and transports it when they have a large load. The hope is for us to be able to take it to WM's landfill in Geneva, and let them take it from there.

Snow Plowing Procedure

At the Ward 2 Councilor's request, the City Manager explained the City's new Public Services Superintendent, Larry Meaney, has enacted a new snow plowing procedure. The procedure is attached hereto and may be found on the City's website www.cityofashtabula.com. He reported the following order in which roads are plowed: Major roads and Critical areas, Main roads, Secondary roads, and then Wards. Trucks are placed in each ward. The Manager reported there are 1st and 3rd shift snowplowing crews. The 3rd shift began December 15. They are responsible for clearing the roads at night in order for motorist to move about the City in the morning. Having two shifts limits the available staff but gives coverage for almost 24 hours. When necessary the 1st shift remains on the clock four extra hours, and the 3rd shift begins four hours early. The rule of thumb is after the last snowflake falls, the City is totally plowed.

CITY SOLICITOR'S REPORT

The City Solicitor announced he had not report. He then noted he was not in OSU gear because he did not have time to go home and return for the meeting. He said, "the OSU I support is Ohio State not Oregon State".

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Finance Director reported the department is currently closing 2014 yearend, are working on cash bases journal entries, and she will have unencumbered cash balances at the next meeting. She said right now it looks like the General Fund will close around the projected \$100,000 balance mark. This represents a 1% carryover; she prefers the balance to be at 3%. The Finance Director reported the City 'absorbed a lot of things in 2014, and were lucky we had built up some of the reserve to do that'.

Formal Legislation Request

The Finance Director requested RESOLUTION NO. 2015-11 A RESOLUTION REQUESTING AN ADVANCE OF \$200,000.00 ON THE 2014 PROPERTY TAX SETTLEMENT FROM THE ASHTABULA COUNTY AUDITOR. She reported this is a standard yearly request. The funds are received, if enough property taxes have been paid by the time the County Auditor receives the request. 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 the committee will meet on Monday, January 12, at 4:00 p.m., in the 2nd floor conference Room

The Chair announced the Parks & Recreation Board will meet on Tuesday, January 13, at 6:30 p.m., in Pre-Council Chambers.

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

The Chair announced the committee will meet on Friday, January 9, at 8:00 a.m.

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

The Chair announced the committee will not meet in January. They will meet on Friday, February 6, at 8:00 a.m.

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

The Vice Chair announced there is no report. The committee's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 26, at 4:00 p.m.

Work Session – No Session/No Report

FORMAL LEGISLATION REQUESTS - None

PUBLIC DISCUSSION (Regular Agenda Legislation Only) - None

Ashtabula City Regular Council Meeting
Monday, January 5, 2015

CONSENT AGENDA DISPOSAL: Mr. McClure moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to dispose of the Regular Legislation Agenda in the Consent Agenda format; motion CARRIED.

LEGISLATION READING

The Clerk of Council presented the following legislation for Council's consideration:

ORDINANCE

2015-01 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING, IN ITS ENTIRETY, ORDINANCE NO. 2014-158 IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE COMPENSATION OF THE SCHEDULED CLERK IN THE ASHTABULA MUNICIPAL COURT AS REQUIRED BY THE INCREASE IN OHIO'S MINIMUM WAGE, AND TO ADD THE POSITION OF POLICE OFFICER IN TRAINING, AS REQUESTED BY THE CITY MANAGER, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2015. (Municipal Court Judge Albert Campese / City Manager)

ORDINANCE

2015-02 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING COMPENSATION, SALARIES AND WAGES TO ALL EMPLOYEES OF THE CITY OF ASHTABULA, OHIO. (Municipal Court Judge Albert Campese / City Manager)

ORDINANCE

2015-04 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE ASHTABULA COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING INDIGENT DEFENSE SERVICES FOR ONE (1) YEAR. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE

2015-08 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$183,000 WITH GPD GROUP FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING DESIGN, FINAL DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION PLANS, AND BID ASSISTANCE SERVICES ON THE DIGESTER REHABILITATION PROJECT – CONTRACT E, AT THE CITY'S WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE

2015-09 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$223,000 WITH GPD GROUP FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING DESIGN, FINAL DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION PLANS, AND BID ASSISTANCE SERVICES ON THE PRIMARY TANK REHABILITATION PROJECT – CONTRACT D, AT THE CITY'S WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE

2015-10 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$225,000 WITH GPD GROUP FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING PROJECT CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION & INSPECTION SERVICES ON THE PRIMARY TANK REHABILITATION PROJECT AT THE CITY'S WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT. (City Manager)

RESOLUTION

2015-11 A RESOLUTION REQUESTING AN ADVANCE OF \$200,000.00 ON THE 2014 PROPERTY TAX SETTLEMENT FROM THE ASHTABULA COUNTY AUDITOR. (Finance Director)

RESOLUTION

2015-12 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO APPLY FOR, ACCEPT AND ENTER INTO A WATER POLLUTION CONTROL LOAN FUND AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF ASHTABULA FOR PLANNING, DESIGN AND/OR CONSTRUCTION OF WASTEWATER FACILITIES; AND DESIGNATING A DEDICATED REPAYMENT SOURCE FOR THE LOAN. (City Manager)

Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to waive the reading of the above Regular Agenda Legislation; motion CARRIED. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to waive the Charter Requirement of two readings of the above Regular Agenda Legislation. On the roll call to waive the Charter Requirement of two readings: Mr. Hamrick, Mr. Pugliese, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Misener, Mr. McClure, Mr. Ducro IV voted yea; motion CARRIED. On the roll call to adopt the above Regular Agenda Legislation: Mr. Hamrick, Mr. Pugliese, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Misener, Mr. McClure, Mr. Ducro IV voted yea; motion CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

Police Department Hires: The President asked Police Chief Stell to give a briefing on his hires. The Chief reported: "The City Manager authorized me to offer the position to five people; they have all accepted. One of them needs to go through the academy; the other four have. Some procedural items need to be done, after which time they'll be ready to go in the near future. The first four should be ready to attend a council meeting for introduction to City Council and the public within the next two weeks or thirty days". The President said Council would also like to meet the new dispatchers, so the public may see their investment at work.

The Vice President reported the hiring of police officers is a long process, entails a civil service test and several other procedural actions, which lessens the likely of nepotism. He commented how that, while they are not often mentioned, the City's Civil Service Commission plays a major role in the process.

The Police Chief reported the process began with 30 applicants, and a written examination last June or July. Then there was a physical agility examination, interviews with a panel consisting of five veteran officers, background checks, polygraphs, a psychological and medical examination, and a drug screen. He said these processes reduced the number to 11. They were ranked in order of how they finished, and 5 were chosen. The Vice President noted the 5 bring with them experience, talent, veteran service, and one is bilingual. The Chief reported one of the hires is presently deployed overseas, will return in January; therefore the start of his duties will be delayed.

On behalf of City Council, the President thanked the Chief, the members of his staff who worked on the project, and the commitment the persons who were hired have made to be a part of our law enforcement team.

MISCELLANEOUS

The President acknowledged 'our esteemed camera man, Earl Tucker'. He has begun another year of allowing Council meetings to be televised. He thanked Mr. Tucker for all he does for the City, and committing his 1st and 3rd Monday evenings to working the camera.

Ohio State University (OSU) Buckeyes Football Team: The President echoed the Manager's sentiments about our community's support for Head Coach Urban Meyer. He thanked the Ward 2 Councilor for his suggestion to have us wear OSU gear in support of their upcoming college championship game, Monday, January 12, at 8:30 p.m. The community wishes them well. Regardless of the outcome, going to the championship is good for Coach Meyer, his family, and our community. The City Manager said, "When we win on January 12, please leave the signs alone". That would be the red Urban Meyer signs around town.

GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Mr. Nelson Morrison, 325 West 48th Street, Apartment 915: announced the phone number of the persons responsible for HUD inspections at his apartment complex, just in case the City should need it. He suggested our patrolmen have body cameras like so many other community are purchasing for their police officers. His last comment was GO BUCKS!

Mr. Donte Conard, 725 West 33rd Street: asked if a citizen takes care of a vacant lot resulting from a structure being removed from the property with grant funding, if the City could be reimbursed for the citizen doing so. The Manager explained how NIP grant funding is given to the Ashtabula County Land Bank (ACLB), which is a body of persons established in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). What will happen is – mostly through tax foreclosure or a property is donated to the Land Bank, it will become part of the ACLB and owned by them. The NIP funds will be used to demolish the property. The Manager said a fund guideline permits there to be different ways established to dispose of the property, otherwise the ACLB has to own it for three years. He said the ACLB has established a 'Side Lot Program'. So if a home next to someone is razed, and the land becomes clear, the property would be offered to the owners on each side of the land for a very, very nominal fee (he believes it is \$100).

An owner is able to let the City or the ACLB know of their interest, so when the property comes down the neighbors would be the first to be called. The Manager said because there are so many county-wide demolitions to be done, the ACLB's intent, at this time, is not to acquire property and hold on to it. He said Cuyahoga County is acquiring property and making different areas more assessable to sale in order to improve the area, (e.g., industrial park). He said the ACLB's intent is to look at properties that would have an end user really quickly in order to get it back on the tax rolls. The Manager said he knows Mr. Conard has a few properties he is interested in which are on the list of 99 properties Ashtabula City submitted to the ACLB. The Manager told Mr. Conard he will be contacted when the property becomes available.

Mr. Conard commended the City for the growth he has seen since moving her from Cleveland – a big city. He said, "I do see Ashtabula as a very, very up and coming city". He said he used to be an underwater/deep sea diver, therefore has been around and has seen other small cities, and sees "a large potential for a lot of growth in our City". Mr. Conard encouraged the public to come and be a part of the changes that are taking place. He said those who do not will wish they would have.

The Vice President asked if structures which have already been razed and the property sits in a 'zombie state' can go to the Land Bank. He said he remembers there are four lots in Mr. Conard's residential area that one of his neighbors faithfully maintains. The Manager responded, yes. There are certain criteria a property has to meet in order to be foreclosed on through the tax process, (e.g., has to be delinquent for so many years). He said the ACLB is looking at some of the properties the City razed with Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) and Moving Ohio Forward (MOF) funding. This aspect takes a lot of coordination of efforts. For example, the properties have to be turned over to the Ashtabula County Auditor's office, that office has to initiate the tax foreclosure on the property, and it has to go to the Ashtabula County Prosecutor's office to begin the foreclosure process, etc. The Manager said it can take up to nine months to get a property into the hands of an interested party.

Mr. Conard asked if a few of the properties are able to be saved if someone is interested in them. The Manager said the ACLB has discussed this and are trying to get more information on the logistics. He then said the State of Massachusetts runs their program by putting the properties in the hands of a contractor, the contractor fixes them up, tacks on 10% of the cost to renovate, presents the property to the state, and when the property is sold, the contractor gets his money back. However, if the City has a house slated for demo, and it is determined that with a little attention it could be rehabilitated, we will try to put the parties together to make it work. The unfortunate part of doing private sales like this is that all that is owed on the property still remains (e.g., taxes, liens, etc.), unless it is "washed" through the ACLB. The Manager said it would be very difficult to have a land bank property given to someone to rehab, and get their guarantee that they will perform the work, so the property does not become stagnate again, and it all fall through.

The President noted part of Mr. Conard's original question was if a citizen could be reimbursed with NIP 'maintenance' funds for taking care of an ACLB property located near them. The President said a private individual cannot be paid to maintain a neighboring parcel of property. The maintenance is strictly performed by a government entity, the municipality, or someone one contracted by the Land Bank to do the maintenance. The City Manager fully concurred.

Mr. Nelson Morrison: asked what is being done with the vacant houses no one is moving into, and said we have a lot of them. The President said the ACLB's goal is to address them.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

RECONVENE OPEN MEETING: N/A

ACTION RESULTING FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION: N/A

CLOSING REMARKS

Tag Line: The President asked everyone to "Remember to Keep Believing in Ashtabula", as we move into a new year.

Next Meeting: The President announced next REGULAR MEETING is scheduled for Tuesday, January 20, at 7:00 p.m.; Pre-Council at 6:00 p.m., due to the observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday holiday on Monday, January 19.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. McClure seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: January 20, 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

SNOW REMOVAL PROGRAM

Snow & Ice Control Program

The City of Ashtabula Public Works Department (CAPWD) has a fleet of 9 pieces of equipment (7 trucks with salt spreaders and 2 loaders) and a staff of 10 licensed operators used in the removal of snow and ice from the City's roads. This equipment is suited with the appropriate plows, salt spreaders, and maintenance measures well in advance of the first sign of snow or ice. The City purchases and uses on average approximately 2,500 tons of salt during the winter season.

Starting in the month of December, the City begins a 3rd Shift of operators from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. to clear roadways overnight and prepare them for the morning commute. Once this shift starts, it is also possible to run our operation of snow removal continuously for 24 hours by bringing this shift in four hours early and holding our 1st Shift over for four hours. After all our roads have been cleared, the 3rd Shift crew begins to work on the accumulated piles of snow in our Downtown and Harbor Business Districts which builds up on the curb line preventing parking access and sidewalk travel.

Snow Routes

The CAPWD removes snow and ice in 5 Wards/Routes throughout the City. This consists of over 260 public major, main and secondary roads. IF you were to just measure the centerline distance of these roads within the City limits, this equates to over 90 center lane miles of road to maintain. Unlike neighboring Townships, the City is also responsible for all State routes and County roads within the City limits such as Rt. 20, Rt. 84 and Rt. 531 (Lake Road) to name a few. ODOT does maintain the end of Rt. 11 from E. 21st St. to the northern terminus.

Winter Storms in General

The severity of the snow event determines the frequency that the roads are plowed and salted. There is no way to estimate the timeframe it will take to clear each road due to the fact that no two events or storms are alike. We ask that residents and businesses be patient and Public Works will clear the streets as soon as possible. Our goal is to clear all roads within 24 hours of the last snowfall.

After Hours, Weekends, and Holidays

When a snow event occurs on weekends or after normal hours of operation, the City's Police Department notifies the Public Works Department to have street crews dispatched into service. It is likely that the street crews could be working 12 hour shifts during such snow events.

Sidewalk and Driveway Policy

The City of Ashtabula does **not** clear sidewalks or driveways. These are the responsibility of the home or business owner. It is unfortunate but snow plow drivers cannot control the snow coming off the edge of the plow. To avoid additional snow entering onto your driveway apron, please remove the snow in your driveway into your yard and not back into the street. There are City Codified Ordinances that apply to the proper removal of snow.

PLEASE BE PATIENT

We will get to your roads as quickly as possible.

1. Please do **not** park your vehicles on the side of the streets during bad weather. This will make it easier and quicker for the snow removal process to be completed. It will also lessen the chance of possible damage to your vehicle. **OBSERVE THE CITY'S SNOW PARKING BAN SIGNS;** This Ban is enforced by City.
2. Do **not** stop too closely behind a stopped snow plow truck. The driver may be preparing to backup and may not see you in the mits of a snow event.
3. Stay at least 50 feet behind any snow plow trucks. Most snow trucks are dispensing salt, and a safe operating distance will lessen the impact of salt hitting your vehicle.
4. Do **not** pass a snow plow trucks unless you have perfect visibility and a clear/safe passing lane. Remember, the driver is focused on the challenges in front of the truck as such; swirling snow, icy conditions, slippery roads, etc....

General Safety Warning

Please do **not** allow your child to play in snow piled alongside the streets or cul-de-sacs. Children playing in these areas may make snow forts and be hidden from the plow truck, not realizing the danger of not being seen and potential for serious injury.

Snow Plowing Procedure

It is the goal to get the roads clear from snow and ice as quickly as possible. The CAPWD works to clear the major roads and potentially critical areas of the City first. Major roads are defined as "key" roads in which much of the traffic flows into via other main or secondary roads. Critical areas are defined as those areas where there is a greater chance of accident or impact of public health and safety; they would include but may not be limited to; accessibility to hospitals, schools, government buildings, roads having severe elevation changes (hilly inclines), and roads that intersect railroad crossings. Secondary roads are defined as areas that do not collect traffic directly into major roads, but would primary have to flow into a main road before reaching a major road and are determined a "dead end" road.

While clearing these major roads and critical areas, the plow trucks are typically operating in tandem (one lead truck and one trailing truck). This method of plowing permits the City to clear snow and ice from the center lane with the trailing truck positioned to clear off to the curb area and intersections. This way of plowing promotes the best practices of clearing roadways and lessens problems for general traffic to traverse the roads during snow events. Using trucks in tandem also helps control and create more efficient level of salt distribution, as salt is only applied once to the road surface after the majority of snow has been removed. This creates a more efficient use of expensive material and lessens the amount of salt being discharged onto the tree lawn areas.

Below is an **example listing** of some roads by classification that are plowed and salted within the City limits during winter weather events (Please remember there are over 260 roads within the City of Ashtabula);

Major Road and Critical Areas

Lake Avenue, Columbus Ave, Station Avenue
West 9th St, West 13th St, Ohio Ave, Rt. 20
Walnut Blvd., West 19th St, West Avenue
State Rd, Main Avenue, Park Avenue, East 46th St

Main Roads

Myrtle Avenue, Allen Avenue
Harbor Avenue West 24th St
West 54th St, Center St,
Adams Avenue

Secondary Roads

Eleanor Dr, Highland Circle,
Maruba Ave, East 50th St
Popular Ave, Murray Ave
Cleveland Ave, Marion Court