

ASHTABULA CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF ASHTABULA – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
4717 Main Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Monday, December 18, 2017

The President of Council called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., the Ward 2 Councilor offered the opening prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| MEMBERS PRESENT: | Mr. August A. Pugliese | (Ward 2 Councilor) |
| | Mr. Michael D. Speelman | (Ward 4 Councilor) |
| | Mr. Reginald M. Holman | (Ward 3 Councilor) |
| | Ms. Jane E. Haines | (Ward 5 Councilor) |
| | Vacant | (Ward 1 Councilor) |
| | Mr. Christopher J. McClure | (Vice President) |
| | Mr. John S. Roskovics | (President) |

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: None

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 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): None

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

AGENDA APPROVAL: None

PRESENTATION(S): None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The City Manager requested an Executive Session to discuss Personnel/Employment. Mr. McClure moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to approve the request. On the roll call to convene an Executive Session: Mr. Pugliese, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Holman, Ms. Haines, Mr. McClure, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED. The Council and Officers attended the session. Upon return to the floor, the President announced the public meeting reconvened.

St Peter's Episcopal Church Anniversary

The President announced he was invited to attend the 200th Anniversary dinner and program of St. Peter Episcopal Church, on the City's behalf. He was presented with a book on the church's history, which he presented to the Clerk of Council to display in an appropriate place.

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The President announced the Democratic Central Committee appointed Mrs. Kym (Vendetti) Harley to be the new Ward 1 Councilor. She is in the audience this evening. She will take her oath of office and seat at the dais on Tuesday, January 2.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda is a means whereby Council is able to efficiently conduct business by grouping routine items for consideration and disposal.

PRESENTATION OF MEETING MINUTES

The Clerk of Council presented the November 20, 2017 Regular Council Meeting and December 4, 2017 Public Hearing minutes for Council's approval. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Speelman seconded to waive the reading of the minutes; motion CARRIED. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Speelman seconded to approve the minutes; motion CARRIED.

The December 4, 2017, Regular Council Meeting Minutes will be presented at the next Regular Council Meeting.

LEGISLATION AGENDA

- **Formal Legislation Request(s):** None
- **Form and Correctness:** None
- **Legislation Overview:** None
- **Public Discussion (Legislation Portion Only):** None
- **Legislation Reading:** None

REGULAR BUSINESS

PRESENTATION OF MEETING MINUTES

None

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS and COMMUNICATIONS

CITY MANAGER

The Manager presented the following legislation requests:

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-148, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH A. LOUIS SUPPLY COMPANY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$22,693.76 FOR THE PURCHASE OF LIGHTS FOR CITY PARKING LOTS AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND MUNICIPAL JUSTICE CENTER ANNEX. (City Manager) Mr. Speelman moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to approve the request; motion CARRIED.

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-149, 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) Mr. Speelman moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to approve the request; motion CARRIED.

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-150, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF OHIO, DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY, FOR ADMINISTRATION OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND. (City Manager) Mr. Speelman moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to approve the request; motion CARRIED.

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-151, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO REQUEST A WAIVER FROM THE OHIO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY TO USE \$5,000 OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND MONIES TO HELP FUND A REVISION/UPDATE TO THE LIFT BRIDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MASTER PLAN, AND TO EXECUTE ANY NECESSARY AGREEMENTS. (City Manager) Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Speelman seconded to approve the request; motion CARRIED.

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-154, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO MAKE APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF OHIO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY FOR A TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY DISCRETIONARY GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100,000.00 TO ASSIST WITH A PROJECT LOCATED AT 1003 BRIDGE STREET. (City Manager) Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Speelman seconded to approve the request; motion CARRIED.

Health District Licensing Council Appointment

The City Manager requested the appointment of Mr. Ronald R. Kister to the Health District Licensing Council to represent Marinas, effective immediately, with a term to expire on February 18, 2018. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Speelman seconded to approve the request; motion CARRIED.

Garbage Pickup Delayed

Pickup will be delayed one day this week due to the Christmas holiday.

Legislation Request resulting from Executive Session

An ordinance to hire Mr. John Melnik as Public Services Superintendent and approving additional paid vacation leave. Mr. Speelman moved, Mr. McClure seconded to approve the request; motion CARRIED.

Questions/Comments for City Manager

The Ward 2 Council reported there to be lots of slush build up in the center lane of many roads that needs to be removed. The Manager announced the 3rd shift Public Works crew begins next week. He said wards are being cleaned up today and asked motorists to be careful.

CITY SOLICITOR

No Report

FINANCE DIRECTOR

Formal Legislation Request

The Finance Director formally requested ORDINANCE NO. 2017-153, AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS IN THE GENERAL, POLICE LEVY, PUBLIC WORKS, FIRE PENSION, POLICE PENSION, POLICE GRANTS AND SELF INSURANCE FUNDS FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF ASHTABULA, STATE OF OHIO, FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1 THROUGH

DECEMBER 31, 2017. (Finance Director). Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Speelman seconded to approve the request; motion CARRIED.

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS and COMMUNICATIONS

(Chair/Vice Chair)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PARKS & RECREATION (CD/ED/P&R)

(Roskovics/Speelman)

The Chair reported on the committee's Tuesday, December 12, meeting, as follows:

Say Yes Promise Program: The program will permit residents of the City of Ashtabula who graduate from the Ashtabula Area City high school to attend college free. The committee will meet, the first part of next year, with Dr. Watson, Superintendent of the Ashtabula Area City Schools (AACS) and Dean Stocker from Kent State University at Ashtabula to discuss this program. Both entities know of and are interested in the program.

Downtown Landlords: Committee Member Haines reported the greatest challenge the Ashtabula Downtown Development Association (ADDA) has faced is absentee landlords. Over the last 10 years ADDA has done everything they can to improve downtown; much of which has centered on absentee landowners. At the meeting she asked the question how the City of Ashtabula or City Council can address the problem, because she believes our city is being held hostage by absentee property owners. She said the only thing to do is change what we have been doing or else we will continue to get the same results. She said she does not want to repeat the past, but rather would like to move forward. The Chair announced the committee will continue to address absentee landlords.

Business Incubators: In January, the committee will discuss business incubators going into vacant downtown properties. The topic will be an ongoing discussion.

Agenda: The committee's outstanding agenda items were reviewed and the list was cleaned up.

Catholic Churches: The President reported meetings have taken place about the possible closing of all three Roman Catholic Churches located in the City of Ashtabula and a new church built next to Saint John School in Saybrook. He would like Council to consider passing a resolution in support of keeping the Catholic Church's presence in Ashtabula City. He said he sees it as an economic development issue in that currently there are three Catholic congregations within the city limits. When church lets out those folks go to restaurants and other places inside the city. Mr. Roskovics moved, Mr. Pugliese seconded to draft a resolution of support for keeping the Catholic Churches in the City limits of Ashtabula.

The Ward 4 Councilor said, "I'm not against the Catholic Church, I just don't think, as a City official, I'm going to put my stamp on the City sending a letter to a church, in particular. I think the government should be separate from the church." "I will never say the City should intrude on the church."

The Vice President said he is a Catholic and goes to “these” churches, but tends to agree with the Ward 4 Councilor. He said, “This is a body politic and most of us have ties to the Catholic Church, and I don’t think we can do it in good faith. There are other churches that have left the City and we haven’t resolved to do the same thing.” He said he does not remember opposing Harris Memorial when they closed, or any other church and “it’s a little slanted.” He said he does not want any more empty buildings in the City, as well. He said part of the reason for the proposed consolidation of the three churches is because the congregation size has reduced. He believes the same approach should be taken when other congregations consideration consolidation.

The Ward 2 Councilor said he recalls about six or seven years ago the City allowed the schools to move to Saybrook, which he said he believes “started the downfall of Ashtabula City... and there were members of Council that were for putting them out there too.”

The Ward 5 Councilor said she thinks it is important for City Council to make the request for the Catholic Churches presence to remain in the City because we do not need more empty buildings. She said she also believes “when people are looking at Ashtabula it is important that that faith is represented here.”

The President said when he brought this matter to the committee “it was not to tell any church or organization what they have to do. But as a City Council we certainly want to keep as many buildings in the City occupied and being used and keep our neighborhoods strong and keep our City image growing and good.”

The President asked for a roll call vote on the request for a resolution of support for keeping the Catholic Churches in the City limits of Ashtabula: Mr. Pugliese (yea), Mr. Speelman (nay), Mr. Holman (nay), Ms. Haines (yea), Mr. McClure (yea), Mr. Roskovics (yea). The motion CARRIED by a 4 - 2 vote.

Questions/Comments for CD/ED/P&R Committee

The Vice President reported the former city hall is a vacant property whose owner is present. The Manager provided the history on the attempts to get the structure occupied, sold and razed, including one that would have removed the structure at no cost to the City. He said the structure is going to take \$200,000 to \$300,000 to raze due to the asbestos and that he will keep searching for demolition funds, but that the structure will not be razed anytime soon. The Vice President asked if it is possible to address what is wrong with the former city hall (4400 Main Avenue) and keep it. The Ward 2 Councilor said he had always been against razing it until he had the opportunity to tour it some years ago along with others. Those touring were told the structure is sound. But there was a lot of mold that will take a lot of money to address and said it is now time for it to come down.

The Vice President asked if there are grants to assist with razing the former Carlisle’s building. The Manager said no; that the USEPA has yet to provide their assessment after touring the structure earlier this year; and that they are trying to secure funds to address the structure, as well.

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Survey: The Ward 5 Councilor, the committee's liaison to the Parks & Recreation Board, reported the Board is going to conduct a survey to see how the electorate would like to see levy funds spent over the remaining 4 years of the levy.

FINANCE & PERSONNEL - (F&P) (McClure/Pugliese)

The Vice Chair reported on the committee's Friday, December 8, meeting, as follows:

Award: The Ohio Auditor of State's Office presented the Finance Department with an Award of Distinction for the City's 2016 Audit. The award criteria are:

- Timeliness in submitting documentation; this is one of the most important. Good audits have not received awards due to lack of timeliness
- Findings for Recovery (FFR) under \$100 – Ashtabula had none
- Public meeting records are available and how they should be. This is another “most important” criteria because state transparency with constituents by having records available is vital – Ashtabula City has done a great job at this
- Good reconciliation
- “Question Cost” is less than \$10,000, and
- No ethics referrals.

2018 Budget Estimate: The Finance Director reported the following regarding the 2018 Budget Estimate and fielded questions:

- Deficit spending is projected
- This is what the first supplemental appropriations will look like and is dependent upon projected revenues; income tax will be watched, as always
- Projections are conservative
- When there is an increase the “Difference” and “Ending Balance” columns will change, and
- The budget is tight but solid.

At the request of the Vice Chair the Finance Director reported the committee reviewed the final appropriation request, the ordinance for which she requested this evening. The Finance Director reported the year-to-date financials were reviewed and there are no surprises.

The Vice Chair reported the next committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 12, but will be cancelled.

The Chair thanked the Vice Chair for giving the above report due to his absence from the meeting.

PUBLIC WORKS/PUBLIC UTILITIES/CABLE/SCHOOLS - (PW/PU/C/S) (Pugliese/Holman)

The Chair reported there to be no report. He said the next meeting will take place Friday, January 5, if needed.

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SAFETY FORCES - (SF) (Speelman/Haines)

The Chair announced there to be no report; that the committee would not meet in December due to the Christmas holiday; but will meet Monday, January 22, at 8:00 a.m.

WORK SESSION – No report

LEGISLATION AGENDA

- **Formal Legislation Request(s):** None
- **Form and Correctness:** The Clerk of Council certified conformity to Council Rule 21.
- **Legislation Overview:** The President provided a brief overview of the legislation agenda.
- **Public Discussion** (Legislation Portion Only): None

Request Legislation Presentation by Consent Agenda

Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr Speelman seconded to dispose of the Regular Business Legislation Agenda by consent agenda; motion CARRIED.

Legislation Reading

The Clerk of Council presented the following legislation:

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-142, AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENSES OF THE CITY OF ASHTABULA, OHIO FROM JANUARY 1, 2018, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018. (City Council)

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-148, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH A. LOUIS SUPPLY COMPANY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$22,693.76 FOR THE PURCHASE OF LIGHTS FOR CITY PARKING LOTS AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND MUNICIPAL JUSTICE CENTER ANNEX. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-149, 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 NO. 2017-150, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF OHIO, DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY, FOR ADMINISTRATION OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-151, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO REQUEST A WAIVER FROM THE OHIO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY TO USE \$5,000 OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND MONIES TO HELP FUND A REVISION/UPDATE TO THE LIFT BRIDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MASTER PLAN, AND TO EXECUTE ANY NECESSARY AGREEMENTS. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-152, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE LEASE-PURCHASE OF A PUMPER FIRE TRUCK. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-153, AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS IN THE GENERAL, POLICE LEVY, PUBLIC WORKS, FIRE PENSION, POLICE PENSION, POLICE GRANTS AND SELF INSURANCE FUNDS FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF ASHTABULA, STATE OF OHIO, FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2017. (Finance Director)

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-154, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO MAKE APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF OHIO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY FOR A TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY DISCRETIONARY GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100,000.00 TO ASSIST WITH A PROJECT LOCATED AT 1003 BRIDGE STREET. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-155, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANGAER TO DISPOSE OF OBSOLETE AND UNNEEDED VEHICLES. (City Manager)

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-156, AN ORDINANCE ACKNOWLEDGING THE HIRING OF JOHN MELNIK AS PUBLIC SERVICES SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CITY OF ASHTABULA AND APPROVING ADDITIONAL PAID VACATION LEAVE.

Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Speelman seconded to waive the reading of the legislation; motion CARRIED. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Speelman second to waive the Charter requirement of two readings. On the roll call to waive the Charter requirement of two readings: Mr. Pugliese, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Holman, Ms. Haines, Mr. McClure, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED. On the roll call to adopt the legislation: Mr. Pugliese, Mr. Speelman, Mr. Holman, Ms. Haines, Mr. McClure, Mr. Roskovics voted yea; motion CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Speelman seconded to draft legislation authorizing the City's municipal code update; motion CARRIED.

“Tell Us Something We Don’t Know” Segment

This is a new portion of the New Business section suggested by the President to give the dais the opportunity to tell something about Ashtabula we may not know.

1. President
 - a. At the December 8, Finance & Personnel Committee meeting, Fire Chief Shawn Gruber announced the department secured a grant to remodel the fire station kitchen.
 - b. There are lots of great holiday gifts to purchase locally.
2. Vice President
 - a. The Ward 5 Councilor, on behalf of Council, shopped locally for all the items for the gift bags presented to the Clerk of Council and Finance Director. The Ward 5 Councilor said

shopped on Bridge Street the weekend of their Open House and encouraged everyone to “shop the businesses you want to keep.”

3. Ward 4 Councilor

- a. Committee meetings are open to the public. He encouraged attendance at the Safety Forces Committee meeting because the Fire and Police Chiefs are usually present if anyone wanted to meet them.
- b. He said when he was in the Marine Corps he worked with the Toys for Tots organization. He said it is a good and beneficial organization and encouraged the public to support them. He said 90 to 95% of what is donated is given to children.

4. Ward 2 Councilor

- a. The cookies that were gifted to Council will not last the night.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION/COMMENTS (General Matters)

Mr. Anthony Cantagallo, City of Ashtabula

- Shared photos and commented on business signs that are in violation of a City ordinance because the businesses they represent no longer exist.
- Commented on trash that was placed at the entrance to a closed Main Avenue business and has been there for months.
- Commented on the blight and slumlord problem he said exists in downtown Ashtabula and the City’s power to go to the owners and tell them to clean their properties up.
- Commented on how inexpensive it is to purchase a building on Main Avenue.
- Introduced Mr. Michael Thomas, a new business owner of a business to soon open downtown and showed photos of his remodel that is in progress.
- Commented on Mr. Chris DiGiacomo’s recent investment in a new business located on Main Avenue, which business moved from another Main Avenue location.
- Announced there are 44 vacant storefronts on Main Avenue, between West 58th Street and Route 20, not including five located on West 46th Street.
- Believes there are a lot of people doing a lot of things to better Main Avenue and believes they are getting no help from the City.
- Said it was during his time as city manager that a company was going to take the former city hall down at no cost in lieu of leasing the former Ohio Department of Transportation facility, which the City owns, for \$1, but City Council voted it down.

The Ward 2 Councilor said he believes Mr. Cantagallo was city manager when some of the signs of closed businesses existed.

The City Manager reported the reason the signs of closed businesses exist is because it was determined that it would be safer if the guts of the signs were not exposed. He said the ordinance requires the name of a closed business be removed not the guts and poles.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

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ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before this Council, the President declared the meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: January 2, 2018

ATTESTED BY: John S. Roskovics
John S. Roskovics
President of Council

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