

President Chad Doll called the meeting to order at 7:30pm on March 4, 2024 at 701 Parlette Court with the following members present: Alex Stinebaugh, Jessica Muhlenkamp, Brandon Miller, Alex Greve, John Shepline, Terry Campbell and Chad Dunlap. Mayor Dan Lee, Law Director Grant Neal and Safety Service Director Michael Brillhart were also present. There were 5 visitors present.

Motion by Dunlap, second by Campbell to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2024 Council meeting as submitted. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

Ad-hoc Committee – a meeting was held on 02-20-2024 and the following was discussed:

Items for discussion: Strategic Plan Introduction

Previous meeting minutes – None

New meeting minutes – Official introductions were made between the city officials present and the Reveille Team. The gentleman from Reveille began with the presentation they had prepared, in which they explained their history, experience and recent success. They moved on to discuss the process behind their comprehensive plan strategies. They explained different techniques they find useful when communicating with people, pulling information together, and presenting it in a manner that is practical and useful.

As discussion began to wrap up, the Reveille group explained the next steps needed so we can continue forward.

Next steps being...

Select steering committee

Ideal composition is around 12 members. Reveille provided recommendations for backgrounds members' of the steering committee should have.

Invitation letters will be sent to citizens the committee sees as potential candidates. Reveille will send letter templates to use.

Kickoff meeting with steering committee and Reveille

Tentative date is April 18 at 3 pm – will be dependent upon steering committee status

Parks Committee– a meeting was held on 02-22-2024 and the following was discussed:

All Abilities Park

Post holes have been dug on site.

There are still a few questions about when Miami would like to inspect as part of the new process. There was some discussion about whether or not an Engineer would be needed to sign off on the project.

Eclipse

Jack Hayzlett reported that he spoke with Police Chief Cal Schneider about using caution tape rather than purchasing snow fence. He also reported that the Safety Service Director has confirmed 12 Porta Johns for Veterans Park and 4 for Breakfast Optimist Park.

ParkPlatz Signage

Feedback from previous Councilor Ross Kantner stated that there were ideas but no final decisions had been made. Jessica Muhlenkamp will follow-up with the Auglaize County Historical Society to discuss their ideas for verbiage of the sign.

Finances

Brandon Miller reported that he had confirmed with Auditor the plan to create an additional \$20,000 in Pool revenue from the income that parties bring into the facility. This would give the additional needed dollars to bring the payroll line up. Secondly, an additional \$40,000 is to be moved from Park Improvements to Pool Improvements to get back to the \$50,000 originally discussed.

Formation of new Recreation Advisory Board

Mayor Lee mentioned that his appointment for two members is covered during the last Council Meeting. It was then discussed to schedule a meeting to meet the interested candidates for the positions to be appointed by City Council to learn more about their views and their interest in helping the City Parks. There was a brief discussion on whether or not non-City residents can be appointed, it was decided that since this board will not allocate funds that community members not within the City limits could be accepted. A meeting for March 6th to do this was decided upon.

Waterpark

Hayzlett reported that Purchase orders for the \$10,000 already approved for pool improvements have already been submitted to the Auditor.

13 lifeguards are currently working on their new hire paperwork along with 3 returning assistant managers, two adults who had worked previously with the pool and 8 snack shack employees.

The whale has already been removed for repainting and the bath house is scheduled to have a new drop ceiling installed. The new heating elements (paid for by ARPA funds) will be ready before opening day.

A calendar of weekly events was then discussed as a "Wacky Wednesday" idea to bring additional fun to the normal pool activities. Ideas included a slip n slide, rock climbing and bull riding. These additional items would cost the pool additional funds and it was discussed that gate rates those days may need to increase or business sponsorships found. There was a brief discussion of additional entry "deals" such as afternoon family pricing.

There were also questions around who would take care of the marketing of the Pool on Social media as well as the long term plan for pool repairs.

General Parks

Will start painting fields in April to be ready for baseball, soccer and softball.

Bathrooms will open April 1st so daily maintenance will begin then.

Weed spraying and mulching occurs in the parks as well as other City properties. There was a brief discussion of why the Parks department budget was funding weed spraying for City properties that were not for recreational use.

The Parks Department was honored at the Downtown Wapakoneta Partnership annual meeting with an award for their Christmas Light display.

Donations are incoming from WRI and Breakfast Optimist Club for improvements at Veterans Park as well as a donation from Arbys for pickle ball court surfacing.

Lodging Tax Committee— a meeting was held on 02-28-2024 and the following was discussed:

Wapakoneta Sister Cities

The Sister Cities project for the anniversary visit was discussed. Review with the rubric provided an average score of 16.5. There was some disappointment that there was not a firm commitment on some of the events being open to the public so that additional invitations could be sent. The Sister Cities relationship is a "Feather in the Cap" of the City of Wapakoneta and we want to be able to share that with the community and with adjacent communities. The total cost for the project is \$8700. Eric Ireland made a motion that the project be recommended for funding at \$4500 with a second by John Rausch. It was approved unanimously.

Veteran's Banner Project

The Veterans have an outstanding invoice for \$10,085 and would like to ask for an additional \$5000 for expenses in hanging the Veterans banners. The Electric Department is no longer willing to take care of these banners and this has resulted in a bill from Global Electric who is already licensed to work on the City's poles. To lessen future bills, Harrod Nagel Electric will get approved to work on City power poles as their contracted rate is slightly less. They will hang the remaining banners as well as correct some that are "drooping." There was some explanation of how to properly tighten the banners to keep them from quickly deteriorating. The committee requested that the price of future banners be increased so that future costs for hanging would be included in the price. The Veterans stated that this would make the project too costly for citizens to purchase new banners. The committee then pointed out that the Veterans organization does receive \$20 a banner and those dollars could be utilized to offset the costs of hanging. They stated that this would then impact their ability to invest in the community, i.e. the new historical marker to be placed on Dixie Highway. The group pointed out that it would save money to have the Electric Department hang the banners again because their labor rate is much lower than an outside contractor. Eric Ireland made a motion to recommend \$15,085 to cover the current and future costs of hanging the banners this year. There was a second by John Rausch, the motion was passed. The committee went on to explain that after these dollars were spent a new application would need to be created if additional support for the project was needed in the future.

Motion by Muhlenkamp, second by Campbell to fund \$4500 to the Wapak Sister Cities for the anniversary visit this summer. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

Motion by Muhlenkamp, second by Dunlap to fund \$15,085 for the current and future costs associated with hanging the Veterans banners in 2024. Mr. Campbell asked for the remaining balance of lodging tax funds for this year. Mrs. Muhlenkamp replied, approximately \$60,000. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

Finance Committee– a meeting was held on 02-28-2024 and the following was discussed:

The committee first reviewed notes from SSD Brillhart on the fire department building bond. Mr. Brillhart confirmed that the bond will be at an amount of roughly \$3.9MM. It is currently out for bid with the banks. The project is roughly \$3.5MM for the construction and contingency. We also paid \$192k already for the architectural design and engineering, and there is another roughly \$150K in reimbursable expenses. The auditor would like to keep that extra bond money in the fire department budget to help with cash flow rather than paying the reimbursements back directly to the loan. It was noted that this year we will have an interest payment, and starting next year we will pay interest and principal.

Next, we spoke about the project regarding the 501 and St. Rt. 198 intersection. The city has been allotted funds totaling \$2MM as a grant for the project. SSD Brillhart estimates that the project could start earliest in 2026-27 if agreed upon. If the project is completed, the city would have to fund 20% of the total cost, no matter the final amount. It was also noted that, once Water St. is completed, the street construction funds could be used for this project.

We then spoke about reimbursement from the state for the expenses incurred during the tornadic event last April. We asked for around \$1.3MM and were awarded \$1MM. This is encouraging and will help replenish the expenses from the electric department. The committee thanks all the work that was done to track every expense during this event by city staff.

Next, the committee spoke about the cost of the potential traffic study to be performed both at the corner of Redskin Trail and 501, as well as the potential for a flashing beacon at the intersection of Redskin Trail, Mohican Trail, and Apache Trail. This beacon would be to warn motorists during student crossings. The total cost comes to roughly \$20,000, however the committee requested that the schools be willing to cover the \$5,920 cost of the beacon project for their students crossing Redskin Trail. Mr. Campbell will speak to Mike Watt about this issue.

The final item was a request from administration to create a Human Resources Manager position for the city. This position's salary would start at \$72,072.06. This number was decided on by researching neighboring city HR manager position salaries. Mayor Lee and SSD Brillhart both spoke about the need for an HR manager as the city has over 90 employees and all current HR work is done by SSD Brillhart. The committee then asked many questions regarding funding of the position, position responsibilities, and if there was any crossover between what would be asked of this position versus others. The committee felt that the rest of council should be given the chance to weigh in on the validity of the position, and so there was a motion by Campbell, second by Shepline to bring the ordinance creating the position to the full council. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Dunlap asked if comparable cities have both a Safety Service Director and a Human Resources Manager as part of their staff. SSD Brillhart answered, yes, the cities of St. Marys, Celina and Defiance have a separate employee for each of these positions.

Mr. Stinebaugh asked if there have been safety issues to warrant the traffic study at Redskin Trail. Mr. Campbell answered that school officials and bus drivers have voiced concerns that drivers often ignore pedestrians trying to use these crosswalks. The proposed study would explore new LED lighting options, as well as push-button activation for pedestrians.

Communications -

Clerk McDonald announced a public hearing scheduled for April 1, 2024 at 7:15pm at City Hall for public input regarding the following rezoning request and recommendation: Wapak Storage LLC, Ashland Ave and Wapak St., rezoning of lots 25 and 26 of Ashland Allotment plat, also lots 50, 51, and 52 of the Ardmore Addition plat from R-3 to a M-2 zone (Industrial District).

Guest Petitions -

Mrs. Amy Ambrose of 24 ½ E. Auglaize Street requested Council's permission for the closure of Benton Street from Ohio to Court Streets on March 23, 2024 from 11am-3pm for the annual WapakNaz Church

Easter Eggstravaganza event. Motion by Campbell, second by Greve to approve the request. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays.

Mr. Todd Meier of 809 Helen Drive and representing the Wapak Optimist Club, requested Council's permission to repaint the 'thin blue line' between the center yellow traffic lines on Auglaize Street from Blackhoof Street to the railroad tracks. Mr. Meier stated one of the missions of the Optimist Club is to support local law enforcement, therefore the Wapak Optimist Club members will donate the labor and materials needed to complete the project. Mr. Meier added that the blue line on Auglaize Street was originally painted in 2020 and club members would like to get it repainted before the solar eclipse event week in April. Law Director Neal advised that there are two elements to consider in allowing the thin blue line to be painted on Auglaize Street. Mr. Neal explained that though the first amendment usually calls for neutrality on the government level, the government can express opinions on behalf of itself. The thin blue line is essentially advocating for the police department, which is a part of the government, therefore this does not create a constitutional issue. Another item to consider in painting the blue line are the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation, whose manual does not directly address the unused space between the center yellow traffic lines. Mr. Neal stated there are no safety concerns in painting the blue line and there have been no prosecutions for doing so, therefore he does not foresee a legal problem with allowing the blue line to be repainted. Mr. Campbell asked if any taxpayer money will be used to paint the line. Mr. Meier replied, no, that he himself will personally fund the project and the club is volunteering their services to complete the project. Mrs. Muhlenkamp expressed her concerns over setting a precedent by allowing the blue line to be painted, as it could generate other groups or entities to request the same. Mr. Neal explained that the blue line symbolizes support for an arm of our government, it would be repainted upon City property, and who performs the task of painting the line is not relevant. Mayor Lee requested that Council formally vote on said permission to paint the blue line on Auglaize Street, further requesting that said permission would provide perpetuity to continue re-painting the blue line as needed without further requests to Council for same. Mayor Lee stated that City Administration is in favor of re-painting the thin blue line on Auglaize Street in support of our Police Department. Motion by Campbell, second by Greve to allow the Wapak Optimist Club to provide supplies and labor to re-paint the thin blue line between the center yellow traffic lines on Auglaize Street, from Blackhoof Street to the railroad tracks as needed. Vote – 6 yeas, 1 nay (Muhlenkamp). Motion passed.

Unfinished Business –

Mr. Campbell noted that the Verilife medical marijuana dispensary in Wapak has offered a tour of their facility to City Council on March 18, 2024 at 8:30pm. Clerk McDonald and Law Director Neal recommended that councilors attend this tour in pairs and not as a group, bringing any and all discussion as a legislative body back to City Council chambers in order to adhere to Ohio Sunshine Laws and the Open Meetings Act. Verilife cannot accommodate the requirements set forth by the Open Meetings Act, as they are only inviting City Councilors into their establishment for a tour, not members of the public. President Doll recommended that any Councilors that are interested to tour Verilife, please see Mr. Campbell to arrange an appointment, with no more than 3 members at a given time, and return to the following Council meeting with discussion.

Mr. Miller asked for an update to be provided on geese population control efforts in the city parks.

New Business -

Mrs. Muhlenkamp noted that she recently attended the Ohio Municipal League training for new council members and gave a brief summary of the topics covered.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Ord 2024-05 for the third time re: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF SAFETY AND SERVICE TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE MOULTON TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES FOR FURNISHING EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE.

Motion by Dunlap, second by Stinebaugh to adopt Ord 2024-05. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Ord 2024-06 for the third time re: AN ORDINANCE MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Miller, second by Shepline to adopt Ord 2024-06. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Ord 2024-07 for the third time re: AN ORDINANCE MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Miller, second by Campbell to adopt Ord 2024-07. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Res 2024-08 for the third time re: A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A ROAD CLOSURE FOR PERRY STREET BETWEEN MAIN STREET AND MECHANIC STREET DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ADJACENT FIRE DEPARTMENT BUILDING EXPANSION.

Mr. Campbell asked if both ends of the street will be blocked for construction materials and staging. SSD Brillhart answered, yes, and the demolition will begin March 18th. Motion by Dunlap, second by Campbell to adopt Res 2024-08. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Res 2024-09 for the third time re: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF WAPAKONETA AND REVELLE LTD.

Motion by Campbell, second by Greve to adopt Res 2024-09. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Ord 2024-12R for the third time re: ANNUAL APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE / INTER FUND TRANSFERS FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2024 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Mr. Miller pointed out the amendments made to said ordinance include: Recreation Fund line changed to \$288,573.14 and the Swimming Pool Fund line changed to \$347,970.45.

Motion by Miller, second by Shepline to adopt Ord 2024-12R. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Ord 2024-14 for the first time re: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING JOB TITLES AND PAY RANGES FOR NON-COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UNIT EMPLOYEES OF THE CITY OF WAPAKONETA SPECIFIC TO THE CREATION OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER POSITION IN COMPLIANCE WITH CHAPTER 260 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF WAPAKONETA, OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Dunlap asked if by creating this Human Resources Manager position, if any current employee positions will be eliminated. SSD Brillhart answered, no. Mr. Campbell asked if a collective bargaining unit agent would be needed for this position. Mr. Brillhart stated that an agent would be needed for the final review and sign-off. Mrs. Muhlenkamp asked for the difference between the proposed HR position and the current Office Manager position's responsibilities. Mr. Brillhart answered that the Office Manager position description does not contain language dealing with City-wide human resources management duties, noting these HR duties currently rest on the Safety Service Director position. Mr. Miller pointed out that since the HR position would be supporting all city departments, the costs for the position could be spread amongst various funds, rather than placing all of the pressure on the general fund. Mr. Brillhart added that the vast majority of the positions within the administration office are funded through various sources. Mrs. Muhlenkamp asked if Mr. Brillhart had any comparison data for skill, credential levels, or experience to go along with the salary data he provided from other cities. Mr. Brillhart answered that some cities had college degree requirements, but others weighed more heavily on specific HR experience. Mrs. Muhlenkamp asked for an estimated timeline for posting the job position, interviewing candidates, etc. Mr. Brillhart stated the process could be expedited due to the increased need for help in this area. Mr. Miller reiterated that he does not want to discover later that the position was fully funded with general fund dollars, and asked Mayor Lee to provide his input. Mr. Dunlap also asked why there was a need for emergency language. Mr. Brillhart stated that the position has been needed for the last year or so, and there are three upcoming collective bargaining unit agreements to consider. Mr. Miller, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Greve expressed that Council and the public should have more time to review Ord 2024-14, including an explanation of how the position will ultimately be funded.

Mayor's report:

2.20 Attended Comprehensive Plan Update

2.20 Attended Department Head Meeting

2.21 Regular Office hours

2.22 Attended Neil Armstrong Board Meeting

- 2.26 Attended Board of Zoning Appeal Meeting
- 2.28 Regular Office hours
- 2.29 Attended Update on Expansion of Electric Building
- 3.1 Attended First Friday Event
- 3.4 Attended Waist Management Meeting

Mike Sparks and Luke Frantz volunteered to provide mutual aid to Yellow Springs to help with the severe weather they had last week.

Mrs. Muhlenkamp asked if Mayor Lee's scheduled office hours include opportunity for appointments with the public as well as city employees. Mayor Lee answered, both, and encouraged those interested to please call ahead to schedule time with him. Mrs. Muhlenkamp asked for clarity on the Neil Armstrong Board meeting within the Mayor's report. Mr. Lee replied that he was referencing the museum. Mr. Campbell asked if the mutual aid was for electrical. Mr. Lee replied, yes.

Service Director report:

There will be a public meeting regarding the April 8th solar eclipse event. This meeting is scheduled for March 7, 6:30pm at the Wapakoneta High School Performing Arts Center.

'Clean your Crater' event is scheduled for March 15 - March 25 with dumpsters available and the City Farm open to accept yard waste. A special collection day for paint, electronics, bulbs and batteries will occur on March 23, 9am-12noon at the Wapakoneta Street Department on Harrison Street.

Mrs. Muhlenkamp asked that trash pickup volunteers have access to the City's dumpster.

Mr. Stinebaugh suggested posting the livestream link for the March 7th eclipse meeting on the City's Facebook page.

Mr. Greve asked that graffiti on the concrete wall near the swimming pool be cleaned up.

President Doll asked that the City's voicemail system be tested, as residents are advising that the main number does not allow for messages.

Law Director report:

Had a productive meeting with the new Wapakoneta Area Economic Development Director, Josh Bloomfield.

Scheduling Committee Meetings:

Parks Committee will meet on March 6th at 6pm at City Hall.

Ad-hoc Committee will meet on March 11th at 6:30pm at City Hall.

Motion by Miller, second by Stinebaugh to adjourn the meeting at 8:58pm. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

President

Clerk of Council