Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 12, 2015 ~ 7:30 P.M.

Louis J. R. Goorey Worthington Municipal Building
John P. Coleman Council Chamber
   6550 North High Street
   Worthington, Ohio 43085

City Council

Bonnie D. Michael, President
Robert F. Chosy, President Pro-Tempore
Rachael Dorothy
Scott Myers
David M. Norstrom
Douglas Smith
Michael C. Troper

D. Kay Thress, Clerk of Council
CALL TO ORDER – Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance

Worthington City Council met in Regular Session on Monday, October 12, 2015, in the John P. Coleman Council Chambers of the Louis J.R. Goorey Worthington Municipal Building, 6550 North High Street, Worthington, Ohio. President Michael called the meeting to order at or about 7:30 P.M.

Ms. Michael appointed Tanya Maria Word as Temporary Clerk of Council for this evening’s meeting.

Members Present: Robert F. Chosy, Rachael R. Dorothy, Scott Myers, David Norstrom, Douglas K. Smith, Michael C. Troper, and Bonnie D. Michael

Also present: Temporary Clerk of Council Tanya Maria Word, City Manager Matthew Greeson, Director of Law Pamela Fox, Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Director of Finance Molly Roberts, Service and Engineering Director William Watterson, Director of Parks and Recreation Darren Hurley, Chief of Police James Mosic, and Chief of Fire Scott Highley

There were 20 visitors present.

President Michael invited all those in attendance to stand and join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

VISITOR COMMENTS

Ms. Michael explained that City Council normally takes comments from individuals on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month; and the 2nd Monday of the month is our Committee of the Whole working meeting. However, since we have a lot of people here this evening, I would not want people to leave and have to come back on another meeting night, so I’m just going to move forward; I have a speaker slip from Steve Kirk.

Steve Kirk, 253 Crandall Drive, indicated I heard last week indirectly that Council has been approached by proponents of sidewalks on Crandall—during the September 21, 2015 Council meeting. There was a proposal submitted and currently being acted upon by city officials in one capacity or another. I received a copy of that document today that is the red line draft currently in their hands.

There are many residents that have asked repeatedly to be included in these discussions and processes and are deliberately being excluded. It seems that decisions are being left up to the persons promoting the change not our city officials. Council says they are listening…I understand they are listening but unfortunately it seems to be that they are having exclusive meetings with the proponents of the sidewalks. It sounds like everyone else will simply be advised of the conclusions.
There seems to be more public information available if someone wants a variance to their residence. At least there is a sign in the front yard noting public hearings. Many residents have sought out information about these sidewalk conversations but minutes to council meetings have not been updated on the City’s website since July 2015. I understand everyone is busy, but 90 days seems excessive. How can the general public have any idea of what is happening concerning these matters.

It’s about trust…I have a handful of letters from residents who can do no more than ask that these letters are made a matter of record. This public forum is the only means for their voice to be heard. We ask that Council have an open forum meeting to hear from other concerned residents. There is a reasonable consensus that changes to these Ordinances will be far reaching to us and other residents of Worthington. In this political election year it’s about governance by the people, transparency and full disclosure and no hidden agendas.

I am extremely disappointed that the council would even entertain conversation about changing an Ordinance for the exclusive benefit of such a minority of residents. I ask in closing that Council explain its next steps in these matters. Who will advocate for us and specifically how does this play into Worthington’s comprehensive improvement plan? I submit my comments and these six (6) letters from other residents.

Ms. Michael commented there was nothing on the agenda, and few citizens from Crandall Drive came just like you, got a sheet and said they wanted to speak; we gave them the opportunity to speak. They said they had some ideas on what to change; and we said you are welcome to show us your changes and nothing more than that. They sent an e-mail in, that e-mail has gone nowhere except looking at it; there has been zero action taken on it. There have been no meetings, no discussions, nothing. They submitted an idea; it’s the same as someone submitting any other idea. There has been no action taken. City Council has not entertained anything nor has Council done one thing in that direction. So at this point and time, it was a few citizens who suggested an idea and the idea has been submitted to Council.

I’m thinking we could refer it to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee to have open public meetings in which residents can come. What is being proposed by other residents is a change in an Ordinance that would impact the whole city; it would not only impact Crandall Drive. It would change the Ordinance as it relates to sidewalk development and something like that we would only do with a significant amount of public input. First I think it should go the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee for their review and recommendation. I also think it would make sense for the City Manager to have a meeting with the residents of Crandall Drive and if something comes forward for a change, it would come forward where it would be very public and there would be a lot of opportunity for input. So right nothing has been done except someone presenting an idea. I really appreciate you coming this evening; some neighbors presented an idea, other neighbors have come and presented another idea, so we have two thoughts on the same topic and it needs to be worked with.
As I stated previously, it first needs to go to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, and then come to City Council at which time we will notice you of the meetings, and anybody who wants to be noticed of the meetings just has to let our City Clerk know and she will e-mail you and tell you when there is going to be a meeting on that particular topic.

Mr. Kirk replied we understand and respect the fact that there is a due process with any change to the Ordinances of the City of Worthington that would have such far reaching effects. We’re simply asking to be included in that because it seems that our neighborhood is much divided on this issue; there is no question in my mind about that. It’s very unfortunate; it creates a very adversarial atmosphere, but as far the approach to City Council, I saw the red line draft today. Ms. Michael commented that was a draft they prepared. The City did not prepare the red line draft; the red line draft is something that was prepared by the residents and emailed to the City.

Mr. Norstrom asked Mr. Kirk to explain why he indicated the process is not transparent, with no public involvement. Mr. Kirk explained from what I understand this is being advocated by Councilman Smith, that he is working directly with these proponents for the sidewalks and has been for over a year. It’s not that I’m trying to be accusatory that Councilman Smith is only advocating for his constituents, but my concern is who advocates for the opponents for these sidewalks? Why are these only being presented for such a select group? Mr. Norstrom replied Councilman Smith has spoken with that group, to my knowledge none of the rest of us have met with that group at all. Mr. Kirk commented maybe Councilman Smith can elaborate on what has been done to date and how many meetings they’ve had and the results of those meetings.

Mr. Norstrom explained that Councilman Smith meeting with a group of citizens is not Council considering or taking action; that is one councilmember acting on his own. So I want to make sure that you understand from a transparency perspective this process has been very transparent. Now the issue with the minutes is one that I’ve struggled with for years. First of all, we were in recess during the month of August, so that’s 30 days with no minutes. I don’t know where we are in terms of the minutes. Mrs. Stewart stated I think minutes might be approved through the beginning of September. I’m not sure why they have not been updated on the website. Mr. Greeson commented that it will be taken care of.

Mr. Norstrom continued to say I think you’re drawing some conclusions that I feel are unfair to Council. I understand why you’re drawing them, but I want to make clear to you that Worthington City Council has not taken any action or met with any residents other than an individual Councilmember. First of all, we are prohibited by law to have more than three of us in any meeting anywhere other than a social occasion. They did come to us; I have actually had a call from them...a typical type of lobbying effort that we see with anything that comes before us. You are here tonight to present as some of you were the night they came before us in April. As the President has described, this is not a short process, this will go to one of our advisory committees and then come back to us. There will be a lot of time for public participation. Please let staff know because we will make sure your names are on the mailing list for anything associated with this issue.
Ms. Michael shared we want to include all Crandall residents and make you aware of any meetings and have your input heard as well as anybody else’s.

Mr. Smith stated to elaborate on your concerns, you are correct; I have been meeting with those residents as much as any group that is interested in something that is coming to me directly and advocating for them. Mr. Norstrom is correct though, as much as I know now, you know about the same as me at this point. Much to my chagrin we haven’t moved this forward as quickly as I’d like for either side to get some sort of resolution.

Mr. Norstrom commented at the meeting we discussed this, we directed staff to address the issue by the end of this month. It may not say much, but there will be a report to us from staff on this issue. Mr. Kirk asked what was involved. Mr. Norstrom replied we directed the City Manager to look into the proposal, and as Councilmember Smith just indicated, this issue has been before us since April and actions have not been taken. As President Michael has talked about, Council will go through the process to see if the Ordinance should be changed.

Mr. Greeson commented there are a couple of different issues here: one is there is a proposal to change City Ordinances which is what I think Mr. Norstrom is referencing. We have not had an opportunity to analyze yet or provide any information to Council about its legal sufficiency. There is a recommendation about paybacks and the payback procedures and we haven’t reviewed that from a financial standpoint, but we will and we will be glad to share it with everyone and then the Council will decide whether they take it on themselves or whether they refer it to a body for further review.

Mr. Greeson continued to say the second issue is one in which Mrs. Fox and I have been fielding a number of calls from residents that would fall into the proponent category, the opponent category, and the “what’s going on” category. We do our best to answer questions both procedurally and technically, but inevitably that message gets mixed as it works its way through the neighborhood and the community. We would be more than happy to host a neighborhood forum if the parties and the community members feel it’s beneficial. Many of the questions are about our current Ordinance, how special assessments work, and how sidewalk construction gets done in Worthington. We want to make sure we are providing equal information because we’ve had several instances now where one side of the issue is present while people with another perspective are not. That happened in April when they were here and it’s happening again tonight. So I think we need to pull people together, answer all your questions as completely as possible at the same time and help that inform the debate. If we put it on the agenda, we will provide a means for notifying people on Crandall Drive and staff is available to meet with people to answer questions via e-mail or telephone.

Mr. Greeson stated there was a question about the Capital Improvements Plan which has been prepared and is a draft that has not been adopted by the Council. I’m required to submit it 60 days in advance of the end of the year and we are distributing it tonight for the first time to them. It includes $100,000 for Bike & Pedestrian improvements in 2016
and those are not specific. There is a funding amount in each year of the five-year CIP that is city-wide and is not specific to any one neighborhood. The potential projects for funding would have to be prioritized by the Bike & Pedestrian Committee and the City Council; there is no specific funding for Crandall at this point.

Mr. Kirk thanked everyone for their responses and asked once Council does their due diligence will you come back to the residents of Worthington and say this has been proposed and these are our conclusions? Will it be presented to the citizens of Worthington to vote on like Issue 38 or something like that or how does it all work?

Ms. Michael asked the Law Director to answer this question. Mrs. Fox explained if there is a recommendation to City Council either by the Bike & Pedestrian Committee or Council’s own initiative, they would choose to have a public debate or public hearing on an Ordinance to change the Code in whatever form it finally ends up being. We have a two reading system here in Worthington, so it’s introduced on one night and then at the next regular Council meeting, which would be either the 1st or the 3rd Monday, there would be a public hearing. If Council is satisfied with the discussion at the public hearing they may choose to have a vote on the Ordinance that evening.

Mr. Kirk confirmed Council votes on it, so it does not directly involve the citizens of Worthington as a whole. Mrs. Fox replied correct, at that stage it’s just a Council vote whether to change the Ordinances.

Ms. Michael commented the only thing I’m aware that requires a city-wide vote are any changes to the Worthington City Charter. Other than the Worthington City Charter, the rest of the Ordinances are voted on by the Worthington City Council. Mrs. Fox stated the residents always have a right of referendum which is what Issue 38 is all about with respect to zoning matters. When Council takes legislative action such as changing the Code, that too is subject to a right of referendum, so residents can petition to place that on the ballot at the next regular municipal election. At the very final phase of that, if you’re not satisfied with Council’s decision, citizens have a right of referendum.

Mr. Kirk commented I realized that when I was looking at this red line draft document and hearing about this earlier last week, I thought there would be many steps that must precede Council from a vote on any of this; but as a practical matter, nobody is hearing anything. The minutes don’t disclose additional action. We met in April, but since that time period it’s all gone dark, other than the fact that I understand that it’s on Facebook or some online blog.

Mr. Myers indicated we did not take action when you spoke before and in my mind it was somewhat of an inferential rejection of what was presented to us. We did compromise and agree to a stop sign. I think that what happened was that the people who were in support of sidewalks probably felt like they weren’t being heard so they came in with a new sales pitch; and they put it down on paper when we asked them to do so. We got what you’ve seen; and that’s kind of where it is now. They’re asking, and what I personally struggle with and I think what my other council colleagues struggle with, is to
put a sidewalk in. You have to assess the property owners; that means we’re taking money out of your pocket and that is a really big deal; that’s a high burden to get over; to force someone to pay an assessment and believe me, we understand that. That’s why they’ve come back to us with another proposal because I think they understand it’s a high burden. I understand what you’re saying and we certainly hear you; we will make certain that we communicate with you when meetings will be held regarding Crandall Drive. The last thing I want is for anyone to get bushwhacked; that is not the tradition here.

Mr. Kirk stated from what I am hearing from other residents, this is not something that you can just reduce to a financial matter. The value of our neighborhood from viewpoint of the longtime residents addresses green space, why we chose this place to raise our kids, which we raised safely. Council put in stop signs to address safety concerns. Now the sidewalk issue is bubbling up again. There’s a big difference on spending $500,000 on sidewalks and the green space it tears up. Mr. Myers stated we understand that. Ms. Michael commented there seemed to be agreement on the stop sign. The sidewalks are a bigger issue which would be placed on an agenda and discussed at length before anything would be decided.

Mr. Greeson asked Council, do you want me to host a neighborhood meeting to address questions about the sidewalk procedure and how it all works? Council replied yes. Mr. Norstrom commented, the meeting should discuss how it all works or doesn’t; since this Ordinance passed, we have not built a sidewalk in Worthington under it. Mr. Greeson commented I understand there are procedures under state law as well, and we can answer questions about that. Mr. Myers remarked Mr. Norstrom is right, we’re not exactly going out and building a lot of sidewalks. When we get a new house or a new development, we require that they do sidewalks, so we have sidewalks to nowhere. Mr. Norstrom stated that we know of other communities in central Ohio who have had very successful sidewalk programs and as Ms. Dorothy nods her head, she is probably more knowledgeable of this than I am, but we will get more information on this in the weeks and months ahead.

Ms. Dorothy stated, in general, I think our government moves a lot faster maybe than other governments, but in normal life I know I took quite a long time to get the adjustment of how slow it moves. I don’t see this being a resolution definitively for at least a year if not longer. It’s going to take a while to make sure that we have sufficient public input to make a decision either way of what might happen; but we thought we had enough public input that we wanted to explore the possibility of changes with plenty of time to have public input and make sure everyone is notified of what that input is.

Ms. Michael commented in the time I’ve been on Council, there is one time where we installed sidewalks for the safety of children in an area and let me tell you there were quite a few evenings of packed council chambers of residents coming in, pro and con, having good public debate, opportunity to discuss and negotiate a resolution towards the situation. It took about two or three months of meetings at the City Council level before something was actually resolved. So our procedure has been to include people and to
have public meetings, but we have no control if somebody shows up to speak on an item that’s not on the agenda. We give people a chance to speak.

Mr. Kirk stated I see a clear separation from deciding the sidewalk issue and changing the law. Anyone can approach Council and request as change to the law. Mr. Norstrom previously stated we have laws in place to address the situation. I think we have good laws and I don’t know that they need to be re-written for this circumstance or any other. Ms. Michael stated we wouldn’t re-write a Code lightly because it would impact many areas.

Mr. Norstrom suggested to Mr. Kirk to take a look at the community group WARD (Worthington Association for Responsible Development); they have a website and a couple of their representatives are here this evening.

Mr. Greeson commented we will conduct a cursory analysis of the Ordinance, we’ll share that with you and if it’s your desire, we can schedule it a discussion about how you want to process it on November 2nd. Do you want to refer it to the Bike and Pedestrian Committee or do you want to handle it yourself? What additional information might you want? We’ll probably only have a cursory analysis of it done and we can have a discussion on where it goes next. Mr. Myers reminded Mr. Greeson to keep in mind that’s when the budget meetings begin. Mr. Norstrom stated we did tell the (pro) residents when they were here before that we would have something back to them by the end of October, which would be our November 2nd meeting, so we should at least address it at that meeting from a process standpoint.

Mr. Greeson stated we’ll do a cursory analysis of what they’ve proposed and we’ll talk about the next steps. In the meantime we will schedule a neighborhood meeting to talk about the whole sidewalk process in general. Mr. Myers commented I’m assuming that review will highlight the proposed changes and how they differ from current.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS

Discussion Item(s)


Mr. Greeson explained we are distributing the 2016 proposed Operating Budget and the proposed 2016-2020 Capital Improvements Program and in addition to the reports that Mrs. Roberts will present this evening, we also want to talk about the schedule for discussing the various facets of the Operating Budget and the CIP. If you look at page 2-1 of the 2016 Proposed Budget you will see the schedule for the proposed 2016 Budget presentation and approvals. Before we get into the various standard reports for the month and the quarter, I want to discuss this schedule with you briefly. This has us presenting the initial presentation of the CIP next Monday and a vote on it on December 7th 2015. Then you can see the order of departments and funds. It has you introducing
the legislation on November 16th and tentatively scheduled to vote on December 7th. We discussed at the last meeting coming in early around 6:30 P.M. to provide additional time to discuss some of these budget matters and I think now is the appropriate time to identify which nights we’re going to do that and to have you affirm whether this schedule works for you.

Mr. Myers suggested Council come in early on November 2, 9, and 16 because those all involve presentations by departments. Mr. Greeson commented the capital plan is significant as well. Ms. Michael asked what else is on the agenda for the October 19th meeting? Mrs. Roberts commented the Income Tax Ordinance.

Mr. Greeson asked procedurally if we want to set the start time of the council meetings at 6:30 P.M. we’re going to need a vote to do that tonight; that would make it a regular meeting; otherwise the 6:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M. meeting would have to be separately advertised as a special meeting.

Dr. Chosy suggested that the budget discussions start at 6:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M. Then at 7:30, move into the regular meeting and if necessary come back to the budget.

Mr. Greeson stated he would assess to see if more time is needed to discuss the CIP.

Mrs. Fox commented that under the City Code, Council has to set the time of the next meeting for us not to have to notice it as a special meeting. You can do that meeting by meeting.

Mr. Greeson recommended that Council set the meeting of October 19th at 7:30 PM; the meetings of November 2nd, 9th and 16th at 6:30 PM; that way we can tell the public when we’re dealing with the budget

**MOTION**

Councilmember Norstrom made a motion to set the meeting of October 19th at 7:30 P.M.; the meetings of November 2nd, 9th, and 16th at 6:30 PM with the intent to discuss the budget between 6:30 P.M. – 7:30 PM, discuss other city business at 7:30 PM and if necessary return back to the budget. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Chosy.

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

Mrs. Roberts stated several documents were included this week: the third quarter financial summary, a brief PowerPoint, the September report and the Department of Finance third quarter report which will be combined with the rest of the departmental reports. Ms. Roberts presented the following the Quarterly Financial Report PowerPoint presentation:
Third Quarter 2015 Financial Report

Presentation Overview

- Third Quarter 2015 Financial Report Review
  - Fund Summary
    - All Funds
    - General Fund
  - General Fund Financial Activity
    - Revenues
    - Expenditures

Third Quarter 2015 Financial Report – All Funds

1/1/2015 Beginning Fund Balances: $20,023,436

Year to date total revenue: $28,128,066

Year to date total expenditures: $25,108,608

9/30/2015 Fund Balances: $23,042,895
Ms. Roberts reported the lower revenues are primarily due to grant proceeds received in 2014 for the ODNR grant and EPA earmark funds.
Third Quarter 2015 General Fund Summary

1/1/2015 Beginning General Fund Balance: $10,245,729

Total General Fund Revenue: $19,982,946

Total General Fund Expenditures: $18,324,672

9/30/2015 General Fund Balance: $11,904,003

2015 Financial Report General Fund Summary

• Year to date revenues exceeded expenditures by $1,658,274.
• September expenditures exceeded revenues by $118,880.
• Expenditures tracked at 91.43%.
• Year to date revenues are above estimates by $565,120 and above 2014 year to date revenues by $79,907.
• Income tax collections are above year to date 2014 collections by $373,597 or 2.09%.
• Income tax collections are above estimates by $720,058 or 4.11%.
Mrs. Roberts stated the City’s primary revenue source is income tax. Ms. Michael asked regarding the 73% for income taxes, did something come in larger than before? Mrs.
Roberts replied it depends on the actual revenues collected. We received a property tax distribution in September that diluted that percentage from 75% down to 73%.
Mrs. Roberts stated we are tracking at 91.43% for expenditures compared to budgeted amounts due to staff turnover and related salary savings, as well as consulting lines and year-end payouts for retirements and other contractual staff obligations that will occur later this year that will bring that to at least 95%.
Mrs. Roberts requested a motion for the record that City Council has received these reports.

**MOTION**

Councilmember Troper made a motion to accept the Third Quarter 2015 Financial Report Summary and the September Financial Report as presented this evening. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Dorothy.

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

**Five Year Forecast**

Mrs. Roberts presented the five year forecast. This is in the typical format that you’re used to seeing with estimates for this year that were approved in the 2015 budget. The 2016 budget is what is presented to you this evening with the proposed 2016 budget and the out years are projections. We believe we are presenting a fairly balanced budget, we do rely each year on unexpended appropriations, but historically we have realized those unappropriated balances. We estimate that the annual net cash position is about $16,000 as it is presented to you today.

Mr. Greeson stated we always focus on the net-cash position and we also look at our fund balance, so this five-year forecast shows that we’re maintaining our carry-over fund balance goals of at least 25% through the five years. It projects in 2016 that we’ll have a more meager annual net-cash position. We’ve conservatively projected revenue increases and we’re starting to factor in effects of other things happening in the budget. You’ll see there’s a negative net annual cash position. As we get into the budget and talk more in-depth about the forecast, we’ll talk about some of the trends we see that create this. At least in the inaugural years, it’s not gigantic and we’re going to have to work to solve that and hope that income tax proceeds are healthy.

I would encourage you to read my budget message because it talks about the state cuts and the impacts of those, some of the expenditure trends, thoughts on the maintenance of our carryover balance which we think is critical as well as some thoughts that we’ll cover next week more in-depth on our increased reliance on debt to finance capital improvements. In particular we think that the carryover balance and maintenance of that balance remains critically important for six important reasons:

1. In the future, it is unlikely that we will be able to reduce significant numbers of additional positions without reducing service levels.
2. The fund balance was built by diverting 6.4% of income tax revenues from the CIP to prop up the operating budget. It was an important and necessary step but is not sustainable. The funds are needed in the capital fund so those revenues are not available.
3. The Carryover Fund Balance goal was also achieved as a result of Estate Tax revenue that was received in the final years of the tax. We experienced larger
than expected revenues from this source. This is revenue that will be non-
recurring as the State has eliminated it.

(4) There is a significant reliance on income tax revenue which is estimated to
represent 73% of our General Fund revenues in FY 2016. Income tax revenue can
be volatile and drop quickly in reaction to the economy.

(5) There is great potential for state legislative changes that would have a negative
financial impact on the City. This past year, the State has further reduced local
government fund distributions. Those funds were cut in half in 2008 and this past
year, funds were reduced to cities to provide more funds to townships. There are
hearings on legislation to pay income tax where you live. If that would ever get
traction, it would have a major impact on our budget.

(6) The City’s CIP has an increasing reliance on debt to fund capital improvements.
It is in part due to the volume of equipment and projects and the pressures to
invest in things in our community. It is also because we are at a pinch point due
to the investment in sewers and we have not finished paying off the police building
and community center debt. We have a high credit rating, in part due to our
ability to maintain healthy balances, which will lessen the cost of our debt.

We will get more in depth with these matters in the coming weeks.

(2) Funding for Special Groups

Mr. Greeson shared that we at times have talked about creating a process for
considering how we fund special groups; and not just how we fund them, but what
process we use to determine how we fund them. We constructed a matrix to facilitate a
cornerstone on that subject and we would welcome your feedback on each of these
questions that we are going to pose to you tonight. There is really no specific
recommendation from staff on these matters because there are a variety of ways you can
decide to do this; it can be as simple as you want or as complex as you want. We just
want to imagine the possibilities, share those with you and have you give us some
direction.

Question: What is the total funding amount available to distribute?

Mr. Greeson stated right now the proposed operating budget that was distributed to you
includes the steady funding amount that we’ve traditionally funded plus $50,000 for the
Old Worthington Partnership. Mr. Norstrom asked steady meaning the same as last
year? Mr. Greeson replied correct. Mr. Norstrom confirmed we are only dealing with the
framework. Mr. Greeson replied that is right. It’s at $110,748 in the current budget. You
don’t have to answer this question tonight, but it’s a key question because depending on
how you answer the rest of the questions, it may make it more difficult. Mr. Norstrom
stated the budget for the City is not steady state, correct? Mr. Greeson said yes.
Dr. Chosy asked does the amount of $110,748 include the $50,000? Mr. Greeson replied yes. Mr. Greeson stated that the McConnell Arts Center is separately funded in a different portion of the budget, as is the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Ms. Dorothy asked is there any history of why we have these numbers or how far back we’ve been holding these numbers steady. Mr. Greeson replied in the eight years that I’ve been City Manager, the only amount that we’ve increased was a small amount to the Worthington Historical Society. Mr. Greeson replied I think it’s just been a practice given the years we had financial challenges. Mr. Norstrom indicated it was practiced during the years of the financial challenges and we just really haven’t addressed it since those challenges have gone away. Ms. Michael commented part of that also is that we did make some changes and gave additional amounts to some of the groups when we had the additional funding.

Ms. Dorothy stated I’m looking at the overall funding all together, definitely not the individual groups at this point. I’m just wondering if there’s a certain percentage of revenues that we’re considering or just a lump sum. Mr. Greeson replied no, they are based on the requests that were originally approved by a Council based on services probably as much as a decade ago. The only increase is about $2,500 a couple of years ago. Mr. Norstrom stated the groups were informed their next year’s budget should be the same as the current year. We in no way encourage them to come in with a request for more. We gave them budget constraints that they have had to live with for quite a few years. Ms. Dorothy remarked it only constrained their budget if we were their only source of funding. Ms. Michael stated we are not their only source of funding for most of these groups.

Dr. Chosy stated I recall several years in a row where we increased funding. Ms. Michael stated sometimes in the past, council members have suggested the City’s funding could be reduced each year. Mr. Greeson commented Council has in previous years sought presentations from them asking them to justify what they’re doing to support the community of Worthington and they’ve documented the various public initiatives that they’ve undertaken. Mr. Norstrom is correct in that we’ve told them every year don’t expect additional funding. Mr. Norstrom stated from a policy perspective that is something for us to consider.

**Question: Do current groups need to compete for their existing allocation?**

Mr. Greeson explained the various options: Option A – current recipients need to compete annually; Option B – current recipients keep their existing allocation; Option C – social services do not need to compete; D – Historical Society doesn’t need to compete; and E – arts groups don’t need to compete. The last three options acknowledge that some of these groups play different roles in the community than others.

Dr. Chosy asked I’m not sure what you mean by compete. Mr. Greeson replied there are methodologies where you can set an amount that’s budgeted and have an opportunity for groups to ask for potentially increased funding than they’ve had in the past and then they
would compete against each other and changes could be made in the funding depending on the merits of their proposals.

Ms. Dorothy commented I feel that we sort of already do that for groups that are not on this list; we don’t even give them consideration, so we’re already saying no we don’t care what you’re doing. Dr. Chosy asked are there very many groups in that situation that are not on the list? Mr. Norstrom replied I can think of one right off the top of my head, the historical train.

Dr. Chosy commented I hate for it to be a punching bag type of thing. Mr. Myers commented look at it this way, I think this appropriation, as much as anything, even though it’s a pretty small amount, is a policy statement by Council. We’re deciding what our priorities are; this is our charitable contribution if you will. The same way you would at home. You give your money to the causes you believe in, and so these are the causes that we believe in and want to support. I make distinctions between some of them. I see things like North Community Counseling and Life Care Alliance that are direct service organizations to Worthington citizens. I think Mr. Norstrom brought this up years ago. I like the concept of setting an overall amount and then doing almost a Request for Proposals from groups. I don’t know if there are groups out there that we might support that don’t submit applications because they think they won’t get money because these are the people that always get money. I also don’t know if LifeCare is providing more services than the $1,600 we give them. Actually, I know they’re providing more than $1,600; I sit on a board with their Director. I almost like the idea of going backwards on this, let’s set an amount and let’s open it up. If the Community Theatre wants to ask for $10,000, let them; and if they can justify it, we’ll give it to them. I’m also in favor of (and without getting through the whole budget process I don’t know if this is possible), but I don’t know why we’re stuck at the same amount that we’ve been stuck at for several years. I understand we’re increasing it by $50,000 for one group which we have decided is a priority for the city.

If you look at it, 68% of our appropriations budget goes to two groups. We have $110,748 and $77,000 is going to two groups. Mr. Greeson commented those two groups play unique roles. Mr. Myers replied I’m not saying it’s not money well spent. I’m just saying that’s an expression of our priorities. Mr. Greeson stated that’s a good question and so Option C, D, and E would carve out some of those groups like the Historical Society that have a role that’s different because they have buildings and facilities in the city that some of the other groups don’t have.

Ms. Michael commented I kind like if we’re going to carve something, social services like LifeCare Alliance provides the meals and the counseling agencies providing counseling services to the Griswold Center and counseling services to teenagers in our schools; those to me are services that are very much needed. This is only a portion of their budget; this is not anywhere near their whole budget. Mr. Greeson replied that would be Option C – Social Services recipients.
Mr. Myers commented even those groups, they’re the groups you want to give money to, but I still would like to know how does our money make them better? That’s the approach we took with the Old Worthington Partners and we ask them to justify how our money is going to be leveraged; when you give to a charity the question you ask is what is your operating expense? What are you going to do with my money? Ms. Michael stated in the previous presentations we’ve had in the past for all the organizations, they’ve justified how they’re going to use the money and the social service agencies have gone into the number of people they’ve helped. Mr. Myers replied that we gave them money and so it satisfied our due diligence to be certain it was money well spent. I would like an approach where we set an amount and it should go up by 3% (I’m just pulling a number of a hat), so it goes up to $114,000; so that’s what we have to appropriate. Submit your applications. I am not as concerned about whether they are from Worthington or not, so long as they serve the residents of Worthington. I want them to be non-profit, but I don’t care if they’re specifically 501(c)3; that doesn’t concern me as much. I just want the one operative question answered, “how does our money make you better.”

Ms. Dorothy commented I would definitely like all recipients to submit a form where it explains to us what they’re doing with their money and how it’s helping the community and I would think that we would definitely have categories that we more than likely fund like the Historical Society and social services. We definitely want to keep people accountable.

Mr. Norstrom commented most of us, if not all of us, have been involved in non-profits over the years. I don’t have any opposition to a more or less competitive environment, but to do it on a year-by-year basis, I think we would want to consider a three year, five year or a little bit longer so that they would understand that once we funded them, they would have a level of guarantee for x number of years and then have to justify themselves again rather than coming in every year for that. Consensus was in favor of this idea.

Mr. Myers asked are we sure that there aren’t groups out there that we would want to fund that we don’t? Mr. Norstrom replied I’m sure there are groups out there that we would want to fund if we have an open application process. Mr. Greeson commented we know that existing groups will ask for more money in some cases and there may be a few groups like service clubs that might want to do projects or other not for profits that may do things in Worthington that would have proposals.

Dr. Chosy asked if you take out the MAC, give me examples of other current arts recipients. Mr. Greeson replied the Worthington Chorus and the Worthington Community Theatre.

Mr. Greeson stated I heard a proposal for 3% higher from Mr. Myers. Mr. Myers commented as much as I appreciate the matrix that staff has put together, I look at the approach we took with the Worthington Partnership, they had a specific ask, and we went back to them and said how is this money going to leverage the organization, how does this money make your organization better, and how is that going to make Worthington better? Mr. Greeson replied we spent a lot of time working with them. Mr. Myers
commented I understand that was an unusual situation; believe me I don’t want the Worthington Chorus to have to give me their last three audited financial statements because I doubt that they exist; but the Worthington Chorus can come in and tell me we had 3,000 people show up at our events and we engage 50 members of our community that love this pastime and we integrate with Parks and Recreation in this manner on Concerts on the Green; whatever it happens to be. I don’t think it has to be as formal as maybe we would want from the Worthington Partnership, but I think they can still answer the operative question, “how does our money make them better?” My biggest thing here is if we set an amount and open it up, I want to make sure we’re not missing somebody we might want to fund; and then again this is as much a policy statement as it is a budget statement for me. So I want to put a little more emphasis on maybe how we structure the application and the amount we’re willing to give out and I don’t want it to be a draconian application process.

Mr. Troper commented I would like to see an audited financial statement or a form 990. Mrs. Roberts stated that her office audits the groups.

Mr. Myers stated I have put out an idea that we make it an open-ended application process, we expand the amount by 3%, and put a general posting in the newspaper and on the website “We have a certain amount of money that we’re willing to give to special groups; if you would like to apply, please apply. If you’ve applied in the past, please apply again. Ms. Michael remarked one of the things that needs to be out there is they have a proven record of service to the Worthington community.

Mr. Norstrom asked do we want to paint the statement that funding in the past is no guarantee of funding in the future. Ms. Dorothy replied yes.

Dr. Chosy stated I would like to comment on the $114,000. Since we just added to the Old Worthington group $50,000, we in effect have almost sliced that in half and then we’re only adding $3,000, that doesn’t make sense to me. Ms. Dorothy replied we were at $60,748; the $110,000 includes the $50,000. Mr. Myers commented in years past we’ve funded at $60,000; next year we’ll be funding at $110,000 and I just took 3% of $110,000. I’m just pulling 3% out of the air. Mr. Troper replied I’m fine with increasing it to 3%, but then I’m confused because you want to open it up to more groups, but you want to continue funding to the same groups, that doesn’t seem like it’s practical. Mr. Norstrom remarked I don’t think it was said that we want to continue to fund the same groups. Mr. Troper asked so we’re going to open it up and it’s going to become competitive? Mr. Myers replied I would think that there are certain groups mostly the ones that are currently on the list that are going to get our attention when they put an application in and probably would receive favorable consideration from us since we’ve funded them in the past. Then it comes down to what is the criteria which gets us back to the matrix; look at the ReCAP program; how the CIC grades the applications. I’m moving towards an RFP type of framework, I just want to make sure our money is spent well.

**Question: Do applicants need to be a 501(c)3**
Mr. Myers replied no. Ms. Dorothy stated they should be a nonprofit but don’t have to be a 501(c)3.

**Question: Do they need to be Worthington based?**

Mr. Myers replied I like yes for Option A. They need to serve Worthington residents. Ms. Dorothy commented that’s what “operate” means, not that they’re based in Worthington, but they provide services to the residents of Worthington. Mr. Norstrom remarked someone based in Worthington might be more of a plus versus someone not based in Worthington. Mr. Norstrom said we could consider each of the options but given higher points for service to Worthington residents versus school district residents. Ms. Dorothy commented we want to have option A, but options B, C, and D are all factors.

**Question: Do the applicants need to be in existence for a specific length of time?**

Mr. Myers says no, they just gave funding to the Old Worthington Partnership which was recently reorganized. Mr. Norstrom stated a new organization can come here and compete if they can sell us. Ms. Dorothy commented she was thinking a year so that we could see at least one year of financial reports. Mr. Myers stated if someone comes in here and says we’re a start-up, that’s a risky investment on our part and they’re probably not going to get it, so we’ll encourage them to come back next year. Someone without a proven track record will have to work harder to get funding.

**Question: Is there a limit to the number of years a grant can be awarded?**

Mr. Myers replied no, but I like Mr. Norstrom’s idea the award should be for a period of years. Mr. Norstrom explained it’s not guaranteed for three (3) years, but they could expect it for three (3) years. Mr. Greeson commented it would be subject to annual budget appropriations. Mr. Myers stated three years subject to appropriation. Mr. Norstrom stated they’ll have to determine how to handle new requests if the other requests have already been awarded, perhaps through the use of a reserve of funds. Mr. Myers stated it could be a process that is only conducted every three years or the three percent increase could be put in the reserve. The approach will be decided later.

**Question: Will any groups currently funded outside of the “Special Groups,” section of the budget be included in the process (WIFA, MAC, CRC)?**

Mr. Myers said no we’re not going to include the Worthington International Friendship Association, the McConnell Arts Center, and the Community Relations Commission. They will not fall under this special groups category.

**Question: Will there be a separate process for different types of groups (i.e. social service vs. arts)?**
Mr. Greeson explained a case example of this would be at one point there was some discussion about do you take the limited amount of arts funding that we’re still giving to other arts groups and hand it to the McConnell Arts Center (MAC) and ask the MAC to allocate it, being almost like the United Way for arts? There would be a separate process for arts organizations. Would you want to do the same for social services? Would you want to construct different processes for different policy objectives? Ms. Stewart remarked in essence do you want arts groups competing against social services groups?

Mr. Norstrom and Ms. Dorothy suggested keeping it separate this year. Ms. Michael asked what that means. Mr. Myers said they’ve been talking for several years now of having the arts groups go to the MAC and increase the MAC appropriation by some amount. We need to talk with the MAC to make sure they are ready for this. Mr. Norstrom said as someone on the MAC Board, they have been discussing having them do that for a while and the City should tell them they want them to do that.

Mr. Myers asked how we determine whether an organization is an arts organization. Mr. Norstrom suggested dealing with that another night and it will probably be fairly clear cut on most of them. Mr. Greeson stated staff can talk with the MAC about how they will handle it. Mr. Norstrom suggested they talk with the MAC about how Council wants them to handle it. Mr. Myers said he is thinking it will be something like an additional $5,000 for them to award to other groups after evaluating applications. They might be able to conduct outreach and identify new groups and find they need more funding. The arts groups in town might grow that way. Mr. Greeson stated they may be able to leverage other funding.

**Question: If a committee is established, how much authority is it given?**

Mr. Greeson stated this gets at do you want to identify a committee and delegate the authority to decide who gets funded? It could be a new committee or an existing one. Mr. Myers and Ms. Dorothy stated they think Council should make the decision on the non-arts groups.

**Question: Are the applicants required to have a minimum financial match?**

Ms. Dorothy said she thinks so. Mr. Smith said no because matches can be finagled to not mean much. Mr. Troper said he wants to know how much of their operating budget is the City providing? Mr. Myers said it is a good question for the application. There is no required match but the group must have “skin in the game”.

**Question: Are there specific objectives the Council wants to achieve with the grants?**

Mr. Troper asked whether the grant provides ongoing funding or is intended to be for a specific period of time? Mr. Myers and Dr. Chosy said it has been ongoing. Mr. Troper asked if that is what they want for the program? Mr. Myers said it is like charitable giving. You give to the United Way because it supports their mission. Ms. Michael stated it can be ongoing if they can justify it. Some groups rely on the City for ongoing
operations. Mr. Troper commented so the match questions really answers this. Mr. Greeson said some communities get to this based on need. Are there certain community needs that you want to address? For example, we’re engaged with Drug Safe Worthington and it is a group that might ask for funding. You can either identify needs up front or see what is proposed. Sometimes you can arrive at that conclusion through the process. Mr. Myers said he wants to see the applications and use them to determine priorities.

Mr. Norstrom stated we’re spending a lot of time on this which is a relatively small portion of the City’s budget. Mr. Greeson commented that a lot of these organizations are important to the life of the community.

Mr. Troper asked how we will open it up to other groups. There is a limited amount of funding, especially if groups previously funded are funded again. Mr. Norstrom and Ms. Michael stated they won’t necessarily get funded again. Mr. Greeson stated we will prepare application materials with a cover letter and send it out to the groups we know as well as post it publicly. We’ll use our communication means to get the word out.

Ms. Michael asked if we have asked for the not for profit policies and procedures for the groups that have applied in the past. Mr. Greeson said it depends on who they are. We only asked for them from some groups. Mr. Troper said Council has discussed the list of application items before and there are certain things that we may not want to include. Mr. Norstrom suggested staff review the items to determine if they are a good organization and Council will focus on the programmatic and policy aspects of the program.

Ms. Michael suggested staff could have a checklist for the items. Ms. Dorothy suggested we have weighted criteria we use to evaluate the requests. Mr. Greeson commented staff will develop a matrix and application format for Council consideration.

**UNITED METHODIST CHILDREN’S HOME REDEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Norstrom stated he has talked with various citizens, including representatives of WARD, and read a letter to the editor saying Council is supporting the development at UMCH, which is clearly a false statement.

**MOTION**

Councilmember Norstrom made a motion to adopt the following statement:

Whereas the City has had a long established process for reviewing development applications with consideration by the Municipal Planning Commission (MPC);
Whereas any changes in zoning approved by the MPC must be approved by City Council with additional opportunity for public comment;

Whereas this process provides notice to the public and an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the application and the MPC has delayed consideration of applications when it considers sufficient input has not been received;

Whereas this process has successfully helped the City to develop and redevelop areas of the City;

Whereas the process is being followed in the development of the United Methodist Children’s Home property and the City encouraged UMCH and its developer to present potential plans to the public for discussion;

Whereas these plans were discussed with neighbors and at a specific MPC public meeting;

Whereas attendees at the public meeting had significant opposition to the plan and City Council sent a letter to the developer stating the citizen’s comments should be considered;

Whereas no development plan has been submitted to the City; and

Whereas some citizens have indicated that the City Council supports the preliminary plan presented by the developer

Now let it be known that City Council:

- Has never supported nor does it support the plan presented by UMCH and the developer.
- Supports the proven process for considering development issues, and
- Will only support UMCH redeveloped that enhances the community and meets the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers.

Dr. Chosy commented I agreed with everything except the last line. There is residual concern about how the Comprehensive Plan in the area was developed. I suggest a change to the last line to say “will only support UMCH redevelopment that enhances the community and meets, in the broadest sense, the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan”. Mr. Norstrom commented I phrased it the way he did because it relates to the objectives
specifically listed in the Plan. Dr. Chosy said the problem is people will not take the last phrase well. It makes the rest of it not as important. It needs to be softened.

Mr. Myers asked if that will achieve the result. The Plan sets forth objectives and then there is a map along with specifics that the Comprehensive Plan will and will not consider. The objectives are different. For example, the Plan says we will consider mixed use and a certain height of buildings. The objectives are different. They are policy statements.

Mr. Troper suggested eliminating the sentence. Dr. Chosy said I would agree with that too.

Mr. Norstrom read the objectives from the plan which include consideration of the redevelopment potential of this site recognizing the critical resource and opportunity this site represents within the City; provision of a mix of desireable uses and green space that are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and are currently underserved in Worthington; addressing the needs of current and future residents by providing new housing types/options that are underrepresented in the market and complement Worthington’s current offerings; recognition of the financial goals of UMCH to enable it to continue its mission within the region; expansion of the City of Worthington’s tax base by incorporating uses that allow for new or enhanced sources of revenue; preservation and integration of the existing natural features found on the site related to Tucker Creek; and creation of a well-planned, vibrant, walkable and integrated development of the highest quality that meets or exceeds current best practices for mixed use development.

Dr. Chosy said it is all very good but I’m talking about softening a subjective feeling when people read it. Mr. Norstrom said I don’t accept the amendment.

Mr. Troper said I am not in favor of the third bullet. I want to make it clear that we don’t support the plan and we support the process but I agree that bullet three is too subjective, that we’ll only support if it enhances the community. Mr. Norstrom said I’ll strike “enhances the community”.

Mr. Myers suggested added “while recognizing that the Plan creates a framework not a mandate.” Dr. Chosy said it’s getting closer but it would be better to just not say it.

Ms. Dorothy said the first bullet point is correct. Ms. Michael said that bullet is important because there is a perception City Council has already approved the development plan. She has a question about grammar, making citizens and comments plural in the seventh whereas statement.

Dr. Chosy asked about why “the broadest sense” wasn’t acceptable. There is some wiggle room there. Mr. Myers said there isn’t wiggle room in the objectives. There is wiggle room in the implementation.
Mr. Norstrom stated they are saying very clearly they don’t support what has been suggested. Mr. Myers said the proposal doesn’t meet the objectives.

Mr. Greeson suggested elimination of the last bullet and modification of the second bullet to read “supports the proven process for considering development issues in which we utilize the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Architectural Design Guidelines and Codified Ordinances to make wise decisions for the future of the community.”

Mr. Norstrom said I believe we need to be more forceful and say we don’t like the plan that’s on the record and we support the Comprehensive Plan. Dr. Chosy said I don’t agree. I agree that it is true but it needs to be softer.

Mr. Troper said I’m fine with Mr. Greeson’s comments and I’m fine with we “will only support a UMCH redevelopment that meets the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan” and takes out “that enhances the community”.

Mr. Greeson commented you may also want to put something in here about public input. Mr. Norstrom said public input goes without saying. The point is to say we don’t support this plan and it won’t get past us. At the same time, we believe in the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Michael suggested bullet two, “supports the proven process for considering development issues including public input” and bullet three, “will only support UMCH redevelopment that meets the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan”. Dr. Chosy said no. Mr. Myers asked Mr. Norstrom’s objections to the suggestion by Mr. Greeson. Mr. Norstrom said it is too fluffy and has too much in it. Mr. Myers suggested “which utilizes the Comprehensive Plan to make wise decisions for our community”. Mr. Norstrom said he’ll let someone else make that motion. He called the question on the motion and the second already made with a friendly amendment to eliminate “that enhances the community”.

Ms. Michael said the motion is for “supports the proven process for considering development issues and will only support UMCH redevelopment that meets the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan”.

The motion failed by a voice vote of three in support and four against.

MOTION Councilmember Norstrom made a motion to adopt the statement as originally proposed with “redevelopment” in place of “redeveloped” and with “enhances the community” back in. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers.

The motion failed by a voice vote of three in support and four against.

MOTION Councilmember Chosy made a motion to adopt the statement as originally proposed with “redevelopment” in place of
“redeveloped” and with “enhances the community and meets, in the broadest sense, the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan”. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Smith.

Mr. Norstrom asked about Ms. Dorothy’s objections. Ms. Dorothy said I really wanted to include “the proven process including public input” to make it clear we consider public input. Mr. Myers said the whereas clauses are all about public input. Ms. Dorothy said I have heard from a variety of neighborhoods that it needs to enhance the community so I want that in there. I also believe in the Comprehensive Plan so that is important in the statement.

ADMENDMENT Dr. Chosy accepted a friendly amendment to add “including public input” in the proven process comment. Mr. Smith accepted the amendment also.

Ms. Michael summarized the motion to say “supports the proven process, including public input, for considering development issues and will only support UMCH redevelopment that enhances the community and meets, in the broadest sense, the objectives, of the Comprehensive Plan”.

The motion passed by a voice vote of five in support and two against.

Ms. Michael asked Mr. Greeson to prepare a clean version of the statement.

(3) New Meeting Management Program

Mr. Greeson stated we are implementing a new document management system with an agenda and meeting management module which will help with digital agenda processing and packets. Councilmember Norstrom is testing the iPad this evening to help us troubleshoot it for the rollout to the rest of Council. We are also looking at our agenda format and process to work with this new electronic process. We want to make sure any changes we make are useful to your decision making. We’d like one or two Council members to work with us on that process and product. Ms. Michael, Ms. Dorothy and Mr. Smith volunteered to help.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dr. Chosy asked that something be done about black/white documents when placed on the overhead to eliminate the graininess and smudginess of the document(s).

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION Councilmember Dorothy made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Troper.
The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

President Michael declared the meeting adjourned at 9:50 P.M.

/s/ Tanya Maria Word
Temporary Clerk of Council

APPROVED by the City Council, this 16th day of November, 2015.

/s/ Bonnie D. Michael
Council President