

**City of Worthington and Sharon Township
Joint Meeting Minutes
May 6, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER – Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance:

Worthington City Council met in Joint Session with Sharon Township Trustees on Monday, May 6, 2019, in the John P. Coleman Council Chambers of City Hall, 6550 North High Street, Worthington, Ohio. Worthington City Council President Michael called the meeting to order at or about 7:30 P.M.

City Council Members Present: Rachael R. Dorothy, Douglas Foust, Beth Kowalczyk, Scott Myers, Douglas K. Smith, and Bonnie D. Michael

Sharon Township Trustees Present: Lindsay Duffey, John Oberle, Laura Kunze

Member(s) Absent: David Robinson

Also present: City Manager Matthew Greeson, Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Director of Law Tom Lindsey, Director of Finance Scott Bartter, Director of Planning & Building Lee Brown, Director of Service & Engineering Dan Whited, Clerk of Council D. Kay Thress, Assistant City Clerk Ethan Barnhardt

There were approximately seven visitors present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

NEW LEGISLATION TO BE INTRODUCED

Resolution No. 23-2019

Levying Tax for the Maintenance of Union Cemetery dba Walnut Grove and Flint Cemetery for the Tax Collection Year 2020.

Introduced by Mr. Oberle.

MOTION

Ms. Dorothy made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 23-2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foust.

Mr. Greeson welcomed the Sharon Township Trustees and members of the Cemetery Board of Trustees to tonight's meeting. Annually the Trustees make a recommendation to the Joint meeting for the continued levying of the tax that provides funds to maintain the cemeteries in our communities. He introduced Courtney Chapman, Chair of the Cemetery Board and invited him forward to provide comments.

Mr. Chaman shared that he along with Trustee Oberle and Council member Dorothy serve on the Cemetery Board. They are here to ask for a continuation of the ½ of 1 mill for 2020 for the maintenance and development of the cemeteries.

Mr. Chapman reminded members that the cemeteries are here for the living. They are part of the fabric of Worthington and the Township. They are part of events that occur in the community, such as the Ghost Tour that the Worthington Historical Society oversees in Walnut Grove cemetery. This event enhances the understanding that our residents have about the history of Worthington and Sharon Township. The event has been held for three years and each time it has been sold out.

Mr. Chapman shared pictures of the Meditation Cremation Garden that has been completed at Flint cemetery.

The Cemetery Board acquired the Ozem Gardner homestead at the Flint site. While he has heard rumors over the years of a tunnel on the property, it has been confirmed that a tunnel did exist on the property and was used for the underground railroad. It has since been filled in. Volunteers are being used to try to find its exact location.

The Gardner property was acquired for two purposes. The plan is to renovate the house for the cemetery offices and utilize the outbuildings to store equipment. A master plan for the offices and site have been developed and was approved by the Trustees this past April. The master plan is a long-term plan. It is the guidelines for the current and future Cemetery Boards. The hope is to have the office operational within the next several years. The trustees will begin prioritizing and phasing in the projects.

Mr. Chapman shared that planning is fun, but we must remember that our business is people. People come to the cemetery grieving and in need. Tom Kayati and Elaine Russell are on the front lines. They are the two that need to show compassion and work with these folks. He shared part of the following note that was sent to Elaine:

“I was deeply impacted by your kind words over the phone. I ache in despair, but rejoice in the fact that one person, a stranger, would reach their heart across the phone lines in my time of need.” Suzanne West

One other event that is part of this community is the Memorial Day celebration at Walnut Grove cemetery. This Council and Trustee’s predecessors began this celebration 100 years ago, in 1919. All are invited to the presentation in Walnut Grove after the parade.

He thanked Council and the Trustees for allowing him to share.

President Michael thanked Mr. Chapman for the presentation and update.

There being no additional comments, the motion to adopt Resolution No. 23-2019 carried unanimously by a voice vote.

OTHER

Ms. Dorothy thanked her fellow board members and especially Courtney Chapman and John Oberle for all the work they have been doing with Ms. Russell and Mr. Kayati and Debra Knapke, Co-Chair of the Cemetery Advisory Committee. They have been instrumental in all the work and many, many hours planning for this new Ozem Gardner property. The current Walnut Grove cemetery continues to be improved but

most of the lots are already sold there. The Flint cemetery is still expanding and has spaces for other needs. They are both taken care of so nicely. If you are visiting a loved one or just visiting to have a place to contemplate for any reason, they are very park like and jewels in both communities. She is very happy to be working with everyone at Sharon Township and the whole trustee family.

Mr. Oberle commented that the Board comes before this body once a year asking for the continuation of this tax. This body of Worthington, the Township and specifically the staff are good stewards of the public dollars. The public has entrusted us with this money, and we are not just taking care of things. We are involved in the Memorial Day parade, in the renovations of the Ozem Gardner property that is really going to be the crown jewel. That didn't just happen overnight. He thinks it is because of people. Courtney is the one person who kind of keeps it all together. He thinks that everyone believes in Courtney and in his leadership. He inspires us and has taught us how to run an organization. He has taught us how to be better people. We are a small cemetery organization, but we are really the leaders throughout the state. People come to us and ask for guidance. The reason we have that is because of the people. It's not him. He comes and votes and puts his time in but whether it is Debra, or John Hauelsen, Doug Southgate, or Julie Rice, we have such great expertise it just makes us a much better organization. We are not just there to make sales. We are there to make a difference in people's lives. People are coming to us in their hardest hours and there are no better people than Tom and Elaine to deal with that situation. It is an honor to be a part of this organization. He thanked everyone for their service.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION Ms. Duffey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Myers.

The motion to adjourn carried unanimously.

President Michael declared the meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

/s/ D. Kay Thress
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the City Council, this
20th day of May 2019.*

/s/ Bonnie D. Michael
President of Council