



CITY OF WORTHINGTON
Worthington City Council Minutes
November 4, 2019

6550 N. High Street
Worthington, Ohio 43085

CALL TO ORDER – Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance

Worthington City Council met in Regular Session on Monday, November 4, 2019, in the John P. Coleman Council Chambers of the Louis J.R. Goorey Municipal Building, 6550 North High Street, Worthington, Ohio. President Michael called the meeting to order at or about 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Rachael R. Dorothy, Douglas Foust, Beth Kowalczyk, David Robinson, Douglas K. Smith, and Bonnie D. Michael

Member(s) Absent: Scott Myers

Also present: City Manager Matt Greeson, Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Director of Finance Scott Barter, Chief of Fire John Bailot, Director of Service & Engineering Dan Whited, Director of Planning & Building Lee Brown, Director of Parks & Recreation Darren Hurley, Clerk of Council D. Kay Thress, Assistant City Clerk Ethan Barnhardt

There were 3 visitors present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Michael invited all to stand and join in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

VISITOR COMMENTS

There were no visitor comments.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- Joint Meeting Minutes – October 14, 2019
- Regular Meeting – October 21, 2019

MOTION Mr. Robinson moved, Mr. Foust seconded a motion to approve the aforementioned meeting minutes as presented.

The motion to approve the minutes as presented carried unanimously by a voice vote.

NEW LEGISLATION TO BE INTRODUCED

Resolution No. 61-2019

Approving an Agreement and Permit for and between MCImetro Access Transmission Services LLC, a Delaware Limited Liability Company, to Operate and Maintain a Telecommunications System Within the City of Worthington Pursuant to and Subject to the Provisions of Chapter 949 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Worthington.

Introduced by Mr. Smith.

MOTION

Ms. Dorothy made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 62-2019. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kowalczyk.

Mr. Greeson reported this as a renewal of a permit to operate in the right-of-way. The permit is for three years.

There being no additional comments, the motion to adopt Resolution No. 61-2019 passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Resolution No. 62-2019

Authorizing the Acquisition of Certain Real Estate Interests Involving Parcel 14 for the Northeast Gateway Intersection Improvement Project. (Project No. 602-14)

Introduced by Mr. Robinson.

MOTION

Mr. Foust made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 62-2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Smith.

Mr. Lindsey explained how this is another parcel for the right-of-way project associated with the Northeast Gateway. The process being used in order to use the funds for this project is approved and adopted by the Ohio Department of Transportation and the Federal Department of Transportation. This is a parcel where the property owner negotiated with our right-of-way consultant for an amount above the amount set forth in the resolution, which is why it is coming to Council. The amount for the acquisition was negotiated to be \$42,000.

Mr. Robinson asked if the purchase price was arrived through negotiations with the property owner. He then inquired about the different ways that we are acquiring parcels. Mr. Lindsey confirmed that negotiations were involved. There were various features that were not normally included in just the assessment evaluations. It is not only what we are

acquiring, but how it may affect the property owner. This process is less onerous than other routes for acquisitions. We have a number of other parcels that are moving along slowly. He is optimistic that we can acquire all the properties in a negotiated format. If not, we will proceed to trial and a jury will determine the values.

There being no additional comments, the motion to adopt Resolution No. 62-2019 passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Resolution No. 63-2019 Adjusting the Annual Budget by Providing for a Transfer of Previously Appropriated Funds

Introduced by Mr. Smith

MOTION Ms. Dorothy made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 63-2019. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kowalczyk.

Mr. Greeson described how transfer resolutions move surplus funds between accounts to help ensure we maintain balanced and appropriate budgetary accounting. Staff is asking for a number of small transfers totaling \$48,000 from different accounts in the Parks and Recreation department.

There being no additional comments, the motion to adopt Resolution No. 63-2019 passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Ordinance No. 41-2019 Amending Ordinance No. 52-2018 (As Amended) to Adjust the Annual Budget by Providing for an Appropriation from the Capital Improvements Fund Unappropriated Balance to Pay the Costs of the Police Building Roof design and all Related Expenses and Determining to Proceed with said Project. (Project No. 697-19)

Introduced by Mr. Robinson.

Ordinance No. 42-2019 Amending Ordinance No. 52-2018 (As Amended) to Adjust the Annual Budget by Providing for Appropriations from the Capital Improvements Fund Unappropriated Balance to Pay the Costs of the Fire Station Alerting System and all Related Expenses and Determining to Proceed with said Project. (Project No. 698-19)

Introduced by Mr. Foust.

Ordinance No. 43-2019 Amending Ordinance No. 52-2018 (As Amended) to Adjust the Annual Budget by Providing for

Appropriations from the Accrued Acreage Fund Unappropriated Balance in the Amount of \$50,000.00.

Introduced by Mr. Smith.

Ordinance No. 44-2019

Amending Ordinance No. 52-2018 (As Amended) to Adjust the Annual Budget by Providing for an Appropriation from the Capital Improvements Fund Unappropriated Balance to Pay the Costs of Easement Acquisition for Northbrook Relief Sewer Improvements and all Related Expenses and Determining to Proceed with said Project.

Introduced by Ms. Dorothy.

The Clerk was instructed to give notice of a public hearing on said ordinance(s) in accordance with the provisions of the City Charter unless otherwise directed.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS

Policy Item(s)

- New Liquor Permit – Guru Wines

Mr. Greeson detailed how we were notified by the Division of Liquor Control about the prospective issuance of a liquor permit for Guru Wines in the Linworth area. The procedure is for the Division of Police to look at the request and see if they have any concerns. They are not aware of any concerns and we have no basis under the law to object. The procedure would be to vote to not object and not request a hearing.

MOTION Ms. Kowalczyk made a motion to not object and to not request a hearing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robinson.

Mr. Greeson noted for the record that the permit is a C-1 for beer and C-2 for mixed beverages and sealed carry out.

The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

- Proposed 2020 Budget – Departmental Overview

Mr. Greeson detailed the process and approach to developing the budget. He explained how we try to keep focused on the priorities developed at the City Council retreat and those developed from plans and departmental recommendations. Also included are other issues that were talked about at the retreat but were not in the top list of priorities.

Ms. Stewart presented that there are two items incorporated in the Legislative & Clerk portion of the budget that result in additional funding. The first is funding for a full year for live streaming of City Council meetings. That will now be incorporated in the General Fund. There is also additional funding for the July 4th fireworks celebration that has not been increased in ten years or more. In Personnel there is increased funding for retirement payouts. Next year that funding line has been kept flat with the intention of helping to fund payouts to employees that are currently in the Communications Center who will be affected by the transition of 911 call answering operations. The Mayor's Court jumped from 2018 to 2019 due to changes in various court and health insurance costs. Administration expenditures increased with the fulltime funding for the Assistant City Clerk position from 2018 to 2019 and are now staying relatively flat. Economic Development is funded in two different areas and funding has been pretty consistent.

Mr. Robinson asked about the Economic Development Fund transfer. Ms. Stewart said that we look every year to determine the size of the transfer from the General Fund to the Economic Development Fund to fund activities. If the Economic Development Fund has a higher balance, then a lower amount is transferred. Mr. Robinson asked about the aggregate amount of the two funds. Ms. Stewart said that the expenditure activity has remained similar. In 2018 we had lower expenses due to the actual amount of incentives offered versus what was budgeted. In some years we use more of the budget, in other years we do not.

President Michael asked if there was anything we could do to get the Canadian property owners to improve their buildings in the City. Mr. McCorkle responded that we intend to release a Wilson Bridge Road survey to see what our businesses want. We are also undertaking a multipronged approach to target the Canadian owned properties to encourage them to reinvest in their buildings. We want to keep those buildings competitive and are talking about using façade enhancement dollars and PACE financing to help them. More broadly, we want to find ways to incentivize them to reinvest in their buildings and we want to target the dollars to stay with the buildings.

Ms. Stewart detailed the budget goals for each of the departments. The Legislative and Clerk includes completing the Community Visioning process, efforts to maintain and enhance Wilson Bridge Road, pursue an Age Friendly initiative, support efforts to update office buildings to keep Worthington attractive to businesses, and pursue implementation of the McCord Park Master Plan. The Mayor's Court has the goals of establishing procedures regarding enhanced penalties for distracted driving and to review and update the policy of issuing warrants on all types of cases in light of the national conversation about persons being able to pay fines and assessments.

President Michael asked for information about the changes for distracted driving. Ms. Dorothy said she would like information on the warrants.

Ms. Stewart explained the Administration goals include continuing implementation activities to support the City Council's priorities and successfully completing the transition to the Northwest Regional Emergency Communications Center for 911 call answering.

Economic Development will continue to work on filling vacant space with an extra focus on Wilson Bridge Road.

President Michael stated that it is a shame that the Anthem building did not get filled.

Mr. Robinson asked about the transfer of 911 call answering services and if those costs will be completed in 2020. Ms. Stewart responded that she expects them to be, but she cannot say that there will not be some lingering costs going into 2021. There is some construction for City buildings related to that. However, one-time transition expenses are currently programmed for 2020.

Ms. Stewart said that in Personnel, they are looking to evaluate part time positions including how they are structured and compensated. Additionally, they are looking to develop strong programs and policies for Citywide molestation and abuse detection training. This is particularly important because we offer programs for children.

Ms. Kowalczyk noted that first responders were added to mandatory reporting for elder abuse. She wondered if that area has also been considered in terms of understanding responsibility. Ms. Stewart said she was not sure what the current conversations are regarding that, but we can follow-up.

Mr. Foust asked if Mr. McCorkle has formed any evaluation about how open the Canadian owners are to improve their properties and how much outreach have we done. Mr. McCorkle said that they are challenging to get a hold of and explained how we have had interactions half a dozen times over the past couple years. However, when they have talked, they were receptive, and he feels that their goals are aligned. At the end of the day, they currently have a positive cash flow on their portfolio and that might be good enough for them right now. He detailed how we have had PlugSmart come in and do an in-depth analysis for energy improvements in the buildings. We are going to bring a pitch forward in 2020. We want to help them reinvest and commit to create payroll for those buildings. The strategy will be to put our dollars into that building but they have to commit to payroll in exchange for that. Mr. Foust asked if there were any tools that may better support economic development efforts. Mr. McCorkle responded that we will learn more from the Wilson Bridge survey that will be done soon. He referenced that other communities have a low interest loan program which could help property owners and remove obstacles for them. He explained that he does not have that tool fully vetted yet, but it may be something we talk about. President Michael said that is like the ReCAP program. Mr. McCorkle said that has been successful, but we need more tools in the toolbox.

Mr. Robinson asked how many buildings the Canadian company owns. Mr. McCorkle said they own 8 of our 12 largest buildings.

Mr. Bartter explained how the Finance budget does not have many changes. They have consolidated timekeeping and accrual tracking software from multiple different departments into the Finance Department. Finance goals in 2020 include moving forward with the water and sewer surcharge analysis. In 2020 there is an expiration of our banking

services and we will need to issue RFP for that. The department will incorporate GFOA budget award elements into the 2020 budget document. The Law Department has no notable changes and their 2020 goals include assisting with the Northeast Gateway Project and economic development opportunities. Law will also work on revising and updating the Codified Ordinances as appropriate. Information Technology (IT) is seeing some small investment with the addition of \$33,000 to the computer maintenance line in order to focus on disaster recovery. This is part of a ramp up in IT spending as a result of the assessment that was previously done. IT budget goals are focused on improving our ability to recover from a disaster and on information security.

Mr. Greeson described how there are not a lot of changes to the Division of Police budget. One change is related to our Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS) that is underfunded. There is also six months of funding for two additional administration support positions after the transition to the Northwest Center. We moved the Police Pension Fund into the Division of Police budget to more accurately reflect this expense in the Police Department. Mr. Greeson said that the increase from 2019-2020 is the result of new positions and the recently approved Fraternal Order of Police contract.

President Michael asked why expenses would be decreasing in 2021. Mr. Bartter said that it is due to moving dispatching services out, we will see a drop.

Mr. Greeson described how 911 call answering and dispatch services permeate across a number of different departments. The contractual services in 2020 include onetime costs. Detailed accounting for the transition was requested, which is included in a memo provided to Councilmembers. Onetime costs in 2020 total approximately \$1.2 million. As we have progressed from analysis to hard numbers, we discovered that there were some underestimated costs and we will need to increase the budget document by \$107,000. It is expected that the upfront costs will be recovered in approximately four years and we believe this will improve the level of service and have a greater ability to keep up with technology. Division of Police goals in 2020 include a major effort to update policies and training. They are responsible for managing the consolidation and transition to the Northwest Center. In the CIP there are HVAC and building renovations where they will be coordinating with the Service Department to ensure effective operations.

In the Division of Fire and EMS there are no notable changes in the budget, just normal personnel related increases. Their budget goals also include the transition to the Northwest Center. They will work to implement staff development programs to ensure operational readiness and succession planning. They will explore emergency medical and fire reporting software options and find the best solution for the future and establish training and procedures for enhanced training in low frequency, high-hazard specific emergency response types.

The Planning and Building budget itself is not changing. Their goals include working with the new owners of the Anthem site in the redevelopment of the existing building and site. Along the Wilson Bridge Road Corridor implementing the Wilson Bridge Corridor Zoning to assist in the redevelopment of the corridor. Continue implementing the streetscape and

wayfinding recommendations in the enhancement place. Working on the Worthington Gateway site for maintenance of the site until construction can start, and then continuing to monitor the site throughout construction. Budget goals also include implementation of the new work management software for online permitting and tracking which will benefit customers and provide operational efficiencies.

Other accounts include refuse services which expires at the end of 2021 and is reflected in Dept. 1120. The recycling contract with Rumpke expires sooner than that. Increased Dept. 1140 for special groups by about 3% to provide flexibility for grant program. Dept. 7010 will be increased for the Northwest Center contract.

Next week we will hear from the McConnell Arts Center, the Worthington Historical Society, and the Old Worthington Partnership, which receive the largest amount of grant dollars from the City. Additionally, we will cover the Parks and Recreation Department and the Service and Engineering Department.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked about the Dept. 4010 for Special Parks. Mr. Bartter said that donations dedicated for park improvements are placed there. Mr. Greeson explained that when new residential construction occurs, a fee is collected and placed there. As the fees accumulate, we will allocate those funds towards a project. Mr. Hurley said that the most recent use was for improvements made to the Olentangy Parklands.

Mr. Smith brought up the Bicentennial fund and encouraged Council to look forward to the Semiquincentennial for 250 years.

Mr. Foust brought up Dept. 1170 for the Lodging Tax and he asked if we have any expectations about how that might benefit not just downtown merchants, but the business community as the whole. Mr. Greeson explained that the traditional mission of the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) mission has been to attract visitors to the area. In the absence of the Holiday Inn, the traditional heads in beds role of a CVB is maybe less critical this year and more attracting people to the community. Most often, that has been attracting people to our core destination which has been Old Worthington. But we talk to them about that and how they would propose to market the broader community. Mr. Foust shared that he has met with a few merchants on Proprietors Road and he asked them what they knew about the group that helps downtown merchants. They had never heard of them. He described the potential for people to go downtown and sit outside and have some music going and a sign-up advertising for other businesses in Worthington. There are opportunities for other businesses outside the downtown district. He does not know what we are doing to support them. President Michael explained that the goal of the CVB was to bring in and market people to the entire community, not just the downtown area. They are supposed to be focused on bringing visitors in. Mr. Foust said it seems to him that we are not viewing our business community on the grander scale. Ms. Kowalczyk expressed that it is a transition from focusing on Old Worthington to focusing on the bigger picture. The immediate focus was on tourism but there is room to look at how to incorporate other businesses into that. They have done a great job expanding the tourism focus. Mr. Foust

said he wants to expand our thinking. He wants some expectation of what will come with the dollars we are giving, not just further propping up downtown Worthington.

President Michael said that she is hearing from more people who are concerned about the deer population and asked if there is anything that we would want to do. Mr. Greeson said we would redistribute research that has previously been done by staff. The question is less budgetary and more regulatory and if any of the methods for population control are something we would want to further research.

Mr. Smith said that he attended the ODNR seminar earlier this year on deer management. Other communities have undertaken an intensive process of getting community feedback. Ms. Dorothy said she would agree with Mr. Smith's suggestion to reach out to the community. Mr. Greeson said that there is another ODNR seminar that is coming up and Mr. Barnhardt will be attending. He will update our research.

REPORT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mr. Smith noted that Election Day is tomorrow, and it is everyone's civic duty to vote.

Ms. Dorothy said that she is part of the Mayoral delegation going to Sayama with WIFA. Mr. Greeson noted that Anne Brown and Mayor Holmes are also going to Sayama. This is the 20th anniversary of the signing of the sister city relationship.

President Michael explained that she attended a Central Ohio Mayors and Managers Association meeting and how it is enlightening to hear about some of the legislation going on. That includes the legislation around eminent domain. There is currently a part of the ORC that says if the eminent domain is being used wrongly, that decision can be appealed to the City Council. It is sad because if you are trying to put a trail together, one person can stop it. They are beginning to approach 2020 and will have a legislative agenda which she will distribute copies. We are also getting closer to the Supreme Court hearing challenge around central collection of income taxes.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION Ms. Dorothy moved, Ms. Kowalczyk seconded a motion to adjourn.

President Michael declared the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

/s/ Ethan Barnhardt
Assistant City Clerk

APPROVED by the City Council, this
18th day of November, 2019.

/s/ Bonnie D. Michael
Council President