



CITY OF WORTHINGTON
Worthington City Council Minutes
May 4, 2020

6550 N. High Street
Worthington, Ohio 43085

CALL TO ORDER – Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance

Worthington City Council met remotely in Regular Session on Monday, May 4, 2020, via Microsoft Teams video conference. President Michael called the meeting to order at or about 8:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Peter Bucher, Rachael R. Dorothy, Beth Kowalczyk, Scott Myers, David Robinson, Douglas K. Smith, and Bonnie D. Michael

Member(s) Absent:

Also present: City Manager Matt Greeson, Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Law Director Tom Lindsey, Director of Finance Scott Bartter, Director of Service & Engineering Dan Whited, Director of Planning & Building Lee Brown, Director of Parks & Recreation Darren Hurley, Chief of Police Robert Ware, Chief of Fire & EMS Mark Zambito, Clerk of Council D. Kay Thress

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Michael waived reciting the Pledge of Allegiance since it had just been done for the Joint Meeting with Sharon Township.

VISITOR COMMENTS

There were no visitor comments.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- Meeting Minutes – April 13, 2020
- Meeting Minutes – April 20, 2020

MOTION Mr. Bucher moved, and Ms. Kowalczyk seconded a motion to approve the aforementioned meeting minutes as presented.

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

NEW LEGISLATION TO BE INTRODUCED

Resolution No. 23-2020

Designating Public Depositories and Awarding Public Monies of Active and Interim Deposits.

Introduced by Mr. Smith.

MOTION

Mr. Myers made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 23-2020. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dorothy.

Mr. Greeson detailed how every so often, we have to issue a request for proposals (RFP) for where we deposit the City's resources. Our finance department has recently managed that process.

Mr. Bartter explained how we are in year five of our current banking contract for deposit services. We issued an RFP and received six quality proposals back. Three members of the finance department evaluated the proposals based on seven areas. We are recommending the Park National Bank proposal, who is our current depository. They proposed a no increase fee and we are very happy with our current services.

There being no additional comments, the motion to adopt Resolution No. 23-2020 passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Resolution No. 24-2020

A Resolution Agreeing to Cooperate with the Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation in the Construction of the Northeast Gateway Intersection Improvement Project (FRA-CR84-1.36, PID 95516), to Participate in the Cost of the Project, and Authorizing the City Manager to Enter into Contracts with the Director of Transportation Necessary for the Completion of the Project. (Project No. 602-14).

Introduced by Mr. Robinson.

MOTION

Mr. Bucher made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 24-2020. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kowalczyk.

Mr. Greeson said that we have been committed for quite some time to moving forward the Northeast Gateway Project, which is largely federally funded. This is a critical pre-construction piece of legislation that would allow the project to move forward to the construction bidding phase.

Mr. Whited explained how this will finalize the steps allowing the Department of Transportation to put this on their bid docket in August to proceed toward construction. Assuring they will get payment for our share of the construction, there are multiple

reimbursements, including the Ohio Public Works Commissions (OPWC) and others. This is important to get us to the point in the process where we can start to get dirt moving.

President Michael asked when we expected to see dirt moving. Mr. Whited responded that he would anticipate sometime in September or October depending on how the contractor selection goes and when the notice to proceed is given.

Ms. Dorothy explained how we have been planning for this for quite a long time, but now everyone is concerned about where we are getting our money. She asked where we are getting money for this match. Mr. Bartter detailed how we are going to borrow it. The longer explanation is that we are going to have to submit for reimbursement of about \$2.3 million through the OPWC. We are slated to receive about \$1.8 million back from OPWC which will offset a significant portion of the construction expenses. Ms. Dorothy asked if we are eventually going to have to bond for that difference. Mr. Bartter replied that we will front the cash and then we will issue a debt on it including the right-of-way acquisitions and our portion of construction. Ms. Dorothy expressed how she hopes we will be able to get a great interest rate. We are obviously bonding this project out because it is a long-term investment and something that we are comfortable paying over the lifetime of this. She thinks it will be a great improvement and it is multi-modal in looking at all modes of transportation. She is very excited to see earth moving as well.

There being no additional comments, the motion to adopt Resolution No. 24-2020 passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Ordinance No. 16-2020

Amending Ordinance No. 45-2019 (As Amended) to Adjust the Annual Budget by Providing for an Appropriation from the Capital Improvements Fund Unappropriated Balance to Pay the Design Costs of the Rush Run Stream – Huntley Bowl Improvements and Determining to Proceed with said Project. (Project No. 708-20)

Introduced by Mr. Smith.

Ordinance No. 17-2020

Amending Ordinance No. 45-2019 (As Amended) to Adjust the Annual Budget by Providing for an Appropriation from the West Wilson Bridge Rd. Municipal Public Improvements TIF Fund Unappropriated Balance to Pay the Design Costs of the Corporate Hill Extension Improvements and Determining to Proceed with said Project. (Project No. 709-20)

Introduced by Mr. Myers.

Ordinance No. 18-2020

Amending Ordinance No. 45-2019 (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 2020 Street Improvement Program and all Related Expenses and Determining to Proceed with said Project. (Project No. 707-20)

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.

Policy Item(s)

- Revised Implementation of 2020 Capital Improvements Program

Mr. Greeson presented how when we developed our Capital Improvements Program (CIP) last year, it was pretty tight. We focused heavily on “Must-Do” activities, things that were maintenance of what we have, and fulfilling legal mandates. We also focused on continuing already obligated major projects, strategic initiatives, and things we have already accepted funds for such as the Northeast Gateway project. Outside of those things, our limited dollars were focused on things that were Council priorities. Now we are facing the fiscal impacts of COVID-19 and we are beginning to take a number of careful measures to prepare for some of that impact. We previously gave you a preliminary forecast of the impacts based on data given to us by the Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA) and we are using that to prepare plans in our capital and operating budgets.

When looking at the capital budget, we looked at what we thought could be delayed, and if we thought it could be delayed, we have recommended that it be delayed. However, many of these things will not go away as needs, so you will see them arise over the next several years as projects.

Ms. Stewart explained how staff is anticipating revenue decreases of about \$500,000 in 2020 CIP revenue. When looking at each planned expenditure, some of them have already been spent, particularly with the replacement of equipment, so those are not things we can capture funds back from. Much of the discussion has looked at the projects side of things. Many of these recommendations are just delaying investments because there are not many optional expenses. She has received questions about some projects that are bonded. Reducing the debt that we are taking on gives us greater cash on hand, because as Mr. Bartter explained earlier with the Northeast Gateway, we usually front the money and then get reimbursed later. If our revenues decrease, then the cash flow is important in terms of what cash we have on hand. The Kenyon Brook improvement is a critical project and needs to be done based on the sewer study in compliance with our consent order with the Ohio EPA. However, we expect this year to focus on design and land acquisition. The

construction for that project is likely to occur around 2022 and it is a bonded project. The only expenses in 2020 relate to land acquisition and final design.

For the Building Improvement Program, this is a bundling of multiple smaller projects in maintaining our existing city buildings. We are suggesting that we cut that program in half and delay some of the scheduled maintenance. This also includes delaying the resurfacing of the pools at the Community Center as well as the replacement of the south end door. For the fire hydrant replacement, both replacement and painting are planned. We recommend only the replacement and cancel any planned painting for this year. We suggest moving forward with the investments at the Police Building for the HVAC and remediation, as well as the roof repair. It has also been recommended to cut in half our traffic signal improvements. We have an allocation every other year to maintain traffic signals. We updated the cost for the stormwater improvements at Worthingway. That is a shared project with the schools. We want to postpone a discussion on McCord park renovations, which staff is evaluating the different components and options. We suggest delaying the Selby Park playground until next year. We propose eliminating the 2020 Bicycle and Pedestrian improvements and we also have on hold a large portion of the 2019 allocation that was to fund the crossing at Pingree across 161 until we better understand what resources we will have available.

On the equipment side, staff advises we look at reducing our computer replacement and replacement of server and network components. We will not eliminate them entirely, but reduce the amounts allocated and postpone replacements and upgrades. With our firefighter protection equipment, we expect a lower cost. We think there are savings with the fire hose allocation which can be eliminated from 2021 because we have the funds available in the allocation this year to get us what we need. We propose replacing only two computers in the fire vehicles and delay the others. We think we can reduce the records management based on current quotes to save money. We have a couple of reductions in the Service and Engineering department related to tools we have purchased for the garage and a woodchipper based on current costs. All of those actions result in about \$1.2 million in plain cash expenditures we would put on hold pending understanding what happens with our finances.

If we find our revenue for 2020 ends up better than where we were projecting, that money is available in the CIP fund and would be there to fund these items in 2021. That would be helpful because we pushed these items into 2021, which puts a lot of pressure on 2021. We anticipate that we will continue to lag in revenues because if this year we are down, we will grow off of a lower base in the future. We can expect the reduction in revenues to continue on for several years in the CIP which will make the future years rather challenging. We advise dealing with those future years when we adopt the 2022-2025 CIP later this year.

Ms. Dorothy asked about the Street Improvement Program and Bicycle and Pedestrian improvements. She knows Council passed a Complete Streets resolution policy and we want to try to do a better job with different modes of transportation. There are more people biking and walking in the street. Because there are less cars, we have seen an increase in

speed. An Ohio State study cited that there has been quite a bit of an increase in speed around 161. When someone is hit by a car at 20 miles per hour, they have a 90% chance of survival, but if they are hit at 40 miles per hour, they have a 10% chance of survival. She is horrified we are pushing off from 2019 and now 2020 into 2021, we are not having a pedestrian improvement to get families from Pingree to Granville Park at 161. We had kids going to school at Kilbourne. We had quite a bit of accidents happening at Hartford and 161 and people speeding in vehicles. It is not safe. She thought we made it a policy to try to promote all modes of transportation. The road funding is funded through by just general taxes and the gas and license tax is incorporated in there. She would like to hear more about what we are doing to implement our Complete Streets policy.

Mr. Greeson explained how the Service and Engineering department has done a good job of taking into account the adopted Complete Streets policy. As we prepare various projects, we are required to look at the policy and whether there is an opportunity to do Complete Streets as a result of it. So much of our projects this year are basic maintenance, so the opportunities were few and far between. He asked the Service and Engineering Department to write up what they did find about that program, which will be distributed this week so you can see the work and their Complete Streets evaluation of the Street Maintenance Program. The other things we are doing, it has been a priority to try to enhance in the Wilson Bridge Road area to address concerns of businesses and foster opportunities for redevelopment. We have now started embedding in our RFPs for consultants, language that asks them to evaluate Complete Streets as part of their planning, engineering, and design contracts. Ms. Dorothy said she appreciates hearing that we are thinking through these improvements. One thing she hopes goes into the thought process is reducing speed. Speed kills people who are not in cars. On Corporate Hill Drive she thinks there is a design guideline of 30 miles per hour. We have a bike and ped plan that says bike boulevards should be 20-25 miles per hours. If we want bikes on that, we should be 25 miles per hour or lower. Same with Proprietors.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked how the reduction and delay on signal maintenance and upgrades for traffic signal improvements has safety implications for bike and pedestrian activity. Mr. Whited responded that the answer is that it could, but that is largely for maintenance type of work. We tend to use that if we can, we use it for safety improvements such as indicators. Typically, it is used for maintenance of the equipment during the year. There is no clear answer other than if there were something that could be done, would be done, that would be delayed if we did not have the funding for it.

Mr. Robinson asked Ms. Stewart what percentage the \$1.2 million is of the CIP budget. Ms. Stewart said if you look at the 2020 CIP, we had intended to have debt proceeds so the debt is a little different, we may not issue all the debt this year. Taking out the debt amount, we had anticipated that we would have \$5.2 million in income tax coming in. There is a little miscellaneous revenue. When you take away debt issuance, income tax makes up 96% of all revenue coming into the CIP. If you take out bonded projects, the intended total expenditures equate to about \$5.5 million. Mr. Bartter added it is about 22%. Mr. Robinson asked if the RITA estimate of \$2.7M ends up being close to reality, what is the impact on the projects Ms. Kowalczyk and Ms. Dorothy referenced. Mr. Greeson explained

how they went through an objective exercise to identify everything they thought we could be delayed. We did not start with that fixed 10% number. We think it is prudent to delay all the recommended things that we have outlined. You are correct, if we find out that the economic forecast is in line with what RITA has projected, or somewhere in between, or less, there could be discussions about what priorities might get added back in and moved forward. Mr. Robinson commented how he supports staff's approach. Economic conditions are moving so rapidly that a month from now they could be different.

Ms. Dorothy brought up how right now we have people not working. If we have money and projects, we want to put that money and people to work. She thinks we might have a much better bid opportunity right now this year, to spend that money. It was a really hot construction market but then a lot of things put on the brakes. If we had money as a governmental entity, we have good public projects and public money we can put in the hands of contractors to get everyone back to work. She believes we should look at that. She definitely would want to do as many improvements as we can possibly this year.

Mr. Myers expressed how he thinks the approach is appropriate. We have no idea what is going to happen in the second half of this year. If we get lucky and the money is there in the second half of the year, then we can put it back in. President Michael agreed that we can always put money back in we have not spent.

Mr. Greeson acknowledged and expressed his appreciation for Ms. Dorothy's sentiment. He heard it. This is a Council adopted CIP. He is not sure we need an amendment of the CIP at this juncture, but our intent is consistent with the memorandum to not move forward with the projects outlined, and essentially delay them as articulated tonight.

MOTION Ms. Dorothy moved to remove Number 12 from the proposed delays. President Michael said there was not a second.

THE MOTION FAILED

Mr. Greeson explained how there have been several conversations with Central Ohio cities about postponing July 4th fireworks. There is likely to be a recommendation from the Central Ohio Mayors and Managers Association to collectively postpone fireworks within each jurisdiction, based upon available public health advice. That recommendation is being developed because there has not been statewide guidance on these larger events that are a little bit further out on the calendar. It is hard to project what July looks like. Much like our region's effort to coordinate Halloween, there will be an attempt to coordinate an announcement about fireworks in the next couple weeks. Our fireworks vendor would like an answer about what the plan is within the next ten days. They need to schedule what they need to buy and what plans they need to make. They have been a good long-term partner and we want to be respectful of that and need to make a decision. Our rain date is the Sunday before Labor Day. The vendor would move the fireworks to another date at no cost. They fully understand the situation clients are in. He is inclined to join the emerging consensus of communities and postpone to the rain date and then see where we are as we get closer to that date.

President Michael brought up how she has been in calls and a point brought up is if one community has fireworks and the others do not, you are going to have almost no chance to handle crowd control. For Beggars Night, Worthington is the only one to always hold it on Halloween night and we have people driving from all over the area to drop their kids off. July 4th fireworks will be even more. That is why communities are working together.

Mr. Greeson said the reality is we do not know exactly what will be allowed in the fall and Labor Day weekend. Our vendor would like to have us fulfill our contractual commitment to them sometime in the calendar year. We have flexibility, but these kinds of events require advanced planning.

Mr. Myers asked if we are planning with other communities an end of summer celebration, so we do not run into the same issues of July 4th. Mr. Greeson said that is correct. Most people are looking at Labor Day weekend as a potential alternative. Mr. Myers shared how not celebrating July 4th in this country hurts.

President Michael expressed how we need to be concerned about what people are doing in their backyards for fireworks displays. Mr. Greeson replied we are aware of that and the absence of organized fireworks means more creativity in backyards. There will be a lot of education around that.

Mr. Bucher asked if Columbus is leaning this way with Red, White, and Boom. Mr. Greeson replied that is a private event, but Columbus is getting involved in the conversation.

Mr. Greeson discussed the City's reopening plans, which more detailed plans will be distributed in the next couple days. We are looking at doing a staged reopening with Stage One beginning next Monday, following the best practices as outlined by the Ohio Department of Health such as wearing masks, social distancing, taking temperatures, and monitoring the health of employees. We will also continue to have people working from home. We have a strategy laid out department by department. There will remain significant restrictions to accessing our public safety facilities in order to maintain the health and safety of our first responders. It is encouraged for people to continue to do business with us digitally, via the phone and meetings like this. We have a lot of success stories where we have been able to serve the public through alternate means other than face to face interactions.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked about people coming into the buildings if there will be requirements for them in regard to social distancing and facemasks. Mr. Greeson explained how each of our building's lobbies are different. In one lobby it does not make sense to have more than one person in there at any time because you cannot keep people six feet apart. We will limit the number of people in the lobby at the Service Department. In other lobbies we will mark the floors like in retail locations and have signage that encourages wearing masks. The Service Department has built plexiglass shields for the countertops to protect our employees. Ms. Kowalczyk expressed how she believes it is important to stress the point of wearing a mask to protect others.

REPORT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ms. Dorothy reminded everyone that Giving Tuesday started and she encouraged supporting local Worthington non-profits.

President Michael thanked staff for all of their hard work and time that they are putting in to keep everyone safe.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION Mr. Bucher moved, Ms. Kowalczyk seconded a motion to meet in Executive Session to consider appointment of public employees to boards and commissions and compensation of public employees.

The clerk called the roll on Executive Session. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 7 Robinson, Dorothy, Smith, Myers, Bucher, Kowalczyk, Michael

No 0

Council recessed at 9:04 p.m. from the Regular meeting session.

MOTION Mr. Myers moved, Ms. Dorothy seconded a motion to return to open session at 9:40 p.m.

The clerk called the roll on returning to open session. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 7 Smith, Bucher, Kowalczyk, Robinson, Myers, Dorothy, Michael

No 0

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION Mr. Robinson moved, Mr. Bucher seconded a motion to adjourn.

President Michael declared the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

/s/ Ethan Charles Barnhardt
Management Assistant

*APPROVED by the City Council, this
18th day of May, 2020.*

/s/ Bonnie D. Michael
Council President