



City Council Agenda

Minutes

Monday, September 14, 2020 at 7:30 pm

6550 N. High Street, Worthington, Ohio 43085

Virtual Meeting Information

Link through: worthington.org

Our Government – Live Stream

1. Call to Order

Minutes:

Worthington City Council met remotely in Regular Session on Monday, September 14, 2020, via Microsoft Teams video conference. President Michael called the meeting to order at or about 7:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Minutes:

Members Present: Peter Bucher, Rachael R. Dorothy, 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, 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

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes:

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

Special Presentation(s)

4. Special Presentation - ADAMH Levy

Minutes:

Mr. Greeson introduced Ms. Linda Jakes with Concord Counseling, which is one of the 33 provider agencies that receive funding from the ADAMH Board of Franklin County. She is going to share information regarding the upcoming 2.85 mill levy that is on the ballot this November for ADAMH.

Ms. Jakes described how she is here tonight to make a pitch for Issue 24, which is going to be on the ballot in November. She works with Concord Counseling services, which serves people from the ages of five, all the way up to the oldest person who is 103. 85% of the people that they serve fall below the poverty line. These are the people that get ADAMH dollars to help provide their services. The other thing they do, is provide prevention services to four of the 16 county school districts. One of the challenges that ADAMH Board is facing, is a \$14 million deficit because of the rising need for services. Suicide deaths have been up about 45% in the last 10 years. Opiate deaths have been up 85% in the last 10 years. These are the folks that they are serving on a regular basis. We are also expecting a population increase of 8 percent in the next 10 years. ADAMH has not had an increase in millage in almost 30 years. So, this is really the first time they have come to ask for something new. Issue 24 would be \$1.90 per month for a \$100,000 home.

She shared a story to illustrate the type of work they do about an 85-year old woman, where they checked up on her to make sure she was safe, and found her living in a home with three inches of water. She was hard of hearing and did not hear the knocks on the door or her phone ringing. She now has a home health aide to make sure that her needs can be met. ADAMH dollars help to do this type of work.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked to clarify that this funding would go to services for people that do not have any other source of payment options. Ms. Jakes said that was correct. None of the prevention services they provide in all the schools is covered by commercial insurance. It is covered by ADAMH. They do work through block grants, like interfacing with opiate addicts and helping them get into treatment. That is not billed to commercial insurance. Ms. Kowalczyk asked about federal and state funding that has hopefully come down to Franklin County, and how that has impact ADAMH's ability to serve the county. Ms. Jakes explained how due to the pandemic, the state has cut its budget by 10%. They have done that across the board, so this levy is imperative for the services that they provide.

Ms. Dorothy asked if these services for all of Franklin also include Worthington. Ms. Jakes confirmed that is correct. Ms. Dorothy asked how people would be able to receive services or reach out for help. Ms. Jakes responded that due to the stigma of the services that they provide, marketing has fallen flat, at least in the number of decades that she has provided services. She recommended reaching out to the ADAMH Board, and going to their website to see the provider agencies. Ms. Dorothy

asked whether Worthington has any services that help connect our residents to these services. Ms. Jakes explained that she does not know that Worthington has a program that is specific for mental health services. She could make sure to share marketing materials. Mr. Greeson described how the City does have community grant relationships with both North Community Counseling and Syntero who do work in both the schools and at the Griswold Center. Both organizations provide services to people in need in our community. Ms. Jakes explained that they provide services to formerly homeless folks with the Community Housing Network. President Michael described how the City has worked with Sun Behavioral health, which has been active with the Chamber of Commerce, the Division of Fire and EMS, and Division of Police. Ms. Jakes replied that they work with the ADAMH board as well and are an inpatient facility. They also do what is called intensive outpatient for people who need daily programming.

Reports of City Officials

5. Policy Item(s)

Minutes:

Mr. Bartter detailed how there is quite a difference between the two months of July and August. Starting with July, our expenditures exceeded revenues by over \$1.5 million, predominately due to a number of payroll events including three payrolls in July, annual service credit and the Health Savings Account distribution. That led to a cash balance falling to \$13,986,616 at the end of July, which is 39% of prior year expenditures. In August, it was much better with revenues exceeding expenditures by \$850,599, with income tax collections 24% over 2018. This increase in income taxes is because the due date for the income tax was moved to July, so this is reflected in the August reporting. We finished August 2020 with a General Fund balance back at about 43% of prior year expenditures and Income Tax back to within 1.33% of 2019 collections.

Mr. Robinson explained how we are six months into the COVID budget, and a couple of things jumped out to him that are hopeful. He asked for Mr. Bartter's professional assessment and projections as to what the rest of the year will hold. Year to date collections of income tax are below estimates for the budgeted amount by about 2.3%, which is well below the earlier estimates of 8-10%. Mr. Bartter replied that the RITA projections had us down 10%, but staff offered three potential scenarios to reflect the worst, middle, and best case scenarios. Our best case scenario was being down by 5% and it looks like we will far exceed even our best case scenerio. Mr. Robinson asked if we are anticipating any swings up or down, and whether we are looking at a roughly 2-4% lower budget income tax take. Mr. Bartter affirmed that was correct. Mr. Robinson asked about the numbers from the

August 2020 General Fund overview, noting that it looks like expenses are down significantly, and our General Fund balance is about \$2 million more than the budgeted projection. Mr. Bartter explained that is accurate. As with everything this year there is a lot going on. The City is holding five positions open which is a huge savings. We have appropriated approximately \$637,000 in the General Fund so far in 2020 so the amount of expenditures has increased from the original budget but we have not spent all of that money which is why that number is so high. Members may recall from July that we wanted to get to \$2,000,000 in unspent funds to try to curb expenditures in 2020.

MOTION: Mr. Robinson moved, seconded by Ms. Dorothy to approve the financial report.

The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote

a. Financial Report - July

The Financial Report for the month of July is attached.

b. Financial Report - August

The Financial Report for the month of August is attached.

6. Discussion Item(s)

a. Grants to Community Nonprofit Organizations

Minutes:

President Michael thanked Ms. Kowalczyk for taking the time to find out about the needs of the Worthington Resource Pantry. It is an important resource for our community, particularly for those that are suffering as a result of COVID-19 and associated job losses.

Ms. Kowalczyk explained how she thought Council could discuss the consideration of support for the food pantry based on the needs they have because of COVID and the increased need in the community. If the General Assembly passes the bill allocating the rest of the CARES Act funding, we are expected to get more dollars. She proposes that we consider a distribution to community groups in need that provide services. She does not think Council should discuss the actual community group grant process right now, that should be considered on the normal time frame. We do not have the data on what the needs are of the community besides what is happening with the pantry, which is obvious and apparent to everybody.

President Michael brought up how the libraries are working on a survey that is not completed yet. Mr. Greeson affirmed that is correct and we should have that information in October. There are currently a little over 1,200 responses, and they are hoping to receive around 2,000 from throughout the school district to assess the impacts of coronavirus on our community. That could help to inform some of the priorities that Council establishes as part of the community grant process.

Mr. Greeson detailed how one of the questions for this meeting is the timing

of the community grant process. Last year it was discussed doing the community grants after the first of the year. The question is does Council want to run that process early this year because of COVID. The other approach would be to run it when we have greater insights into what the budget is and available CARES Act funding.

Mr. Robinson affirmed Ms. Kowalczyk's desire to act quickly on the food bank question since they would most acutely experience increased need for services in the time of economic distress and social dislocation.

Mr. Greeson brought up how Mr. Linkenhoker who runs the Worthington Resource Pantry is on the meeting tonight to answer questions and to explain what they are facing right now. One of their needs is for \$2,400 to help transport additional food they need to serve their clients from the Mid-Ohio Food Bank to Worthington.

Mr. Linkenhoker overviewed how over the past six months, they have seen close to a doubling of the number of families that they are seeing throughout the service area, but especially in the Worthington zip codes. They are a fortunate organization to be in Worthington, with so many dedicated supporters and volunteers. They are also lucky to have a great partnership with the Mid-Ohio Food Bank and through the generosity of donors through their organization, food at Mid-Ohio is relatively inexpensive. It may not be something everyone realized, but they purchase much of their food from Mid-Ohio. Their responsibility is getting it here to Worthington. The Resource Pantry has a good relationship with King Business Interiors, who has donated the use of a truck and drivers every month to bring food to the pantry, which they continue to do. However, their truck has been overloaded and they are having to use another big pickup truck to get the extra food. With as many families as there are coming in, they need to have more food than they have now. Another concern is that they receive food from food drives, but with many schools on hybrid, and churches not meeting, many of those drives are limited in their capacity, meaning they need to purchase more from Mid-Ohio. President Michael asked what the \$2,400 would be used for. Mr. Linkenhoker responded that it would be for transportation. They have the option to pay the Mid-Ohio Food Bank to bring the food, and they charge 3 cents per pound. So that would get eight months worth of food delivered to the pantry. President Michael asked if that would be in addition to what King Interiors does. Mr. Linkenhoker said that was correct.

Mr. Smith noted that he did the math and the need has actually increased 2.25 times. There was a spike from July to August considering that the CARES Act money has run out, so he would guess there is going to be more of a

spike as the months progress. He expressed that Council should definitely help and he feels comfortable giving \$10,000 immediately.

Mr. Greeson said it is a little unusual to be asked for \$2,400 and then give \$10,000. It would be helpful to know how Mr. Linkenhoker would want to use those dollars and what outcomes would be produced. Council appropriated some COVID contingency dollars, which he would recommend that we expend funds out of those dollars. Mr. Bartter detailed that to avoid bringing back an appropriation ordinance, if the amount is under \$10,000 we can fit that in our current appropriations in the contingency where Council increased that amount back in April. President Michael asked if we would still have the same difficulty with an emergency if we did something less than \$10,000. Mr. Bartter explained with any appropriation, we are going to have to introduce and pass it by emergency. This would be using an existing appropriation, which cuts that out. We would be fine to do that if that is the wish of Council by motion to expend whatever amount as long as it is under \$10,000 to distribute to the Worthington Resource Pantry. President Michael asked if that would be taken away from what is normally used for the community grant program. Mr. Bartter responded that Council decides what the grant program amount is going to be. This would be in addition to that and coming out of a different appropriation.

Ms. Dorothy shared that she brought this up last week when talking about the additional money we were funding to our downtown businesses. She wanted to make sure we looked at some special appropriations for the Resource Pantry, but that was more in the line of \$2,500. She is still open to the exact dollar figure.

Mr. Linkenhoker explained that if the dollar amount is greater than the requested \$2,400, they would save some of it for after December 31, 2020. Early on in the pandemic, they received a number of donations from the community, but they do not know if those are extra donations made just for this year, or if they were folks who would usually give as part of their end of year giving strategy and just front loaded those gifts. He has spoken to many other food pantries and nobody really knows what the answer is quite yet. If they receive additional funds from the City, they would save it and see where they end the calendar year and budget it to pay to get people food. They want to get people food more efficiently and effectively, and they are making adjustments to their processes to make sure they can accept more food. Additional funds would make it easier to make those suggestions.

Mr. Robinson suggested sticking with the \$2,400 figure and then to urge Mr. Linkenhoker to come next year with an ambitious ask.

Ms. Kowalczyk agreed with that proposal and asked to think about whether

the Resource Pantry can actually provide more service to us in terms of connecting people to different resources in the community. There has been a lot of talk about how communities should be connecting people to their social services. Maybe as we discuss potentially increasing funding, we can look at what we can potentially get out of that for people in the community in addition to meeting their immediate basic needs.

MOTION: Ms. Kowalczyk moved, seconded by Mr. Robinson to permit the City to appropriate \$2,400 to the Worthington Resource Pantry to accommodate their immediate needs for transporting food.

The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote

President Michael asked if there needed to be any further discussion about the community grants. Mr. Greeson shared that he has heard Council say that they would be comfortable with the City administering the process essentially as planned after the first of the year. That would give us the benefit of more insight into the budget. There is an administrative benefit because it would not be running concurrently with the rest of the budgeting activities. If we decide to run it as planned previously, then we can talk later about the amount of money we allocate and the focus of it in terms of the instructions and criteria established for the committee. If it is to be run earlier, then there needs to be discussion about the criteria and the focus.

Ms. Kowalczyk suggested that it be discussed as we get closer to the first of the year, following the normal process, or discuss during the budget discussions what the focus should be with the context that there might be potential CARES Act dollars coming down. Hopefully if we have the funding from that, we can potentially distribute it to these community organizations or maybe others in need who did not benefit from the ReBOOT funding. Mr. Greeson noted that there may be a need for us to be somewhat flexible if the rules require us, if we hear of some community need that is unmet or we are unable to allocate those dollars efficiently in the organization for City expenses and need to spend them quickly on something else. All of those are things that could influence what we do here.

Ms. Stewart discussed one area that needs to be clarified is the larger operating grants for the McConnell Arts Center, the Worthington Partnership, and the Worthington Historical Society. Those are part of the Operating Budget, and this is the time of the year that we get grant applications out to them to complete. She wanted to check in with Council to see if there is anything new or different that should be asked in those applications or it was okay to use the typical application.

Mr. Smith suggested adding a question on the application about what they

plan on doing to help the COVID pandemic and how to restore life.

7. Information Item(s)

a. Update on Initiatives

Minutes:

Mr. Greeson explained how he wanted to provide an update on staff's August activities. We are working on a series of educational budget related videos. Also, we are going to have an online tool where somebody can at their own leisure provide us input and play around with the proposed budget numbers. He is working with Mr. Bartter to structure a Q & A opportunity once our budget proposal is developed. Those efforts have been in response to Council's desire for more community education and engagement around the budget.

There is typically a tendency to focus on high profile matters such as the coronavirus, and not reflecting on the important work being done in the organization to keep the City running. We issued \$5.8 million in bond anticipation notes during the recess. The all-inclusive costs were .78% for those notes, which is down from the 1.36% that we had on the 2019 issuance. We completed our insurance renewal for the 2021 plan year. A shout-out to Mr. Bartter and his team, they finalized the City's 2019 audit, including what is believed to be the City's first single audit of a federal program for funds, the funds utilized for the right-of-way acquisition and design of the Northeast Gateway. We do not utilize federal funds a lot, and there is major scrutiny in the audit process. Both audits contain no citations or findings, and we anticipate we will receive the state Auditor's award with distinction once again. The Northeast Gateway project was bid by ODOT and we will send out some more detailed information about that separately.

Our IT Department has worked on a disaster recovery assessment, and has been working to increase our disaster recovery capabilities. He wanted to applaud Mr. Oliver's team for that accomplishment. They have been working diligently on a number of projects, and supporting all of our divisions and departments. Critical to the transfer of the Northwest Center, they helped the Fire Division with the selection of a records management system and equipment installation. They have configured support for the new records management system for the Police Division. We have also changed our agenda management system to one that is more user friendly and less costly, and provided critical advice in that process. They have done a lot to support the efficiency and effectiveness of our various divisions.

We put the final touches on the waterline master plan that Council received a presentation on earlier this year. You will see recommendations and funding

recommendations related to waterline projects in the CIP. We are wrestling with how we phase those into the CIP. We are moving forward several things related to Rush Run and are pleased that we completed the work cleaning out Rush Run just south of the Northeast Gateway Project. It is not a high-visibility area, but it has been improved and cleaned. We initiated the design of the storm water improvements for the Huntley Bowl Park, which will help with storm water challenges in the area. We are trying to get an easement to move forward with the Northbrook sewer improvement. Mr. Whited's team has worked with ODOT to evaluate our bridges and we have identified some items, but not critical bridge issues. They coordinated on the railroad crossing improvement that we will experience with Wilson Bridge Road being closed for a period of time.

Staff will be coming to Council with a resolution that will be related to supporting the attributable funding application for ODOT around the Linworth 161 intersection. We need one resolution to support that application, which will be submitted soon.

Mr. Whited described a partnership to save resources in order to replace the Linworth culvert. The pipe is failing badly and we need to replace it. Typically it would be a significant project of \$500,000 or more, but the Franklin County Engineer and his staff stepped up to help with a shorter term, but still 15-20 year life cycle enhancement to rehabilitate that culvert and allow it to operate for a period of time. It will be about \$85,000 out of pocket.

Mr. Greeson highlighted a couple of promotions. Chris Craig with the Division of Fire and EMS has been promoted to Assistant Chief. Replacing him as a Captain is Mark Lundy. He encouraged congratulating them.

He explained how Jobs Ohio through One Columbus has distributed 90 boxes of PPE to various small businesses in our Community. Mr. McCorkle made sure that the small businesses that are being supported not only through ReBOOT, but were supported through other means as well.

The Parks and Recreation staff has worked diligently on a number of fronts. They worked closely with the Worthington Youth Boosters to provide fields for summer baseball and field hockey, as well as softball. Also the pools have opened until the pipe project resumes. He also wanted to thank the Legion and the city staff volunteers who worked hard to make sure things went well. The Bike and Pedestrian committee is forming a working group to create an activity this fall that will educate and encourage residents about safe biking and walking in the community. We received the announcement that senior centers can reopen later this month. We are reviewing the health guidelines to ascertain how we comply with those, and when we can appropriately approach our Griswold Center in light of the many staffing changes that have

been made. Lastly, we sent our application and letter in for the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities designation. That means we are committing to forming a committee of partners and stakeholders to pursue the age-friendly designation and plan over a period of time.

Mr. Robinson asked if we have received an actual proposal for the former Holiday Inn site. Mr. Greeson explained they have asked to be on the agenda with a concept that they wanted to share with the Architectural Review Board/Municipal Planning Commission and receive feedback before they finalized any design. Mr. Brown added that they planned to come back tentatively in October with the comments and suggestions they heard from the community and board and commission members.

Ms. Kowalczyk expressed her thanks for getting the age-friendly application submitted. She is excited to be able to participate in the future discussions and planning. She appreciates everything that is done by staff behind the scenes.

Reports of Council Members

8. Reports of Council Members

Minutes:

Mr. Bucher highlighted the Community Energy Savers program that ends this month. We are approximately 75% of the way to the point total needed to secure the \$60,000 that AEP and Columbia Gas are awarding our community to go to small businesses making energy efficiency upgrades. He encouraged everyone to go to CommunityEnergySavers.com/Worthington to help pitch in and get us a few points. You can get a home energy kit that costs nothing, and downloading the app and connecting to your account gets us two points. The data is delayed, so we may be closer than that, but we are in crunch time.

Ms. Kowalczyk thanked everyone who worked to put together the Patriot Day activities, it was very well done. People really appreciated having that and being able to access it online. She mentioned that the Worthington Farmers Market will be moving to a new location at the Worthington Industries parking lot at 200 West Old Wilson Bridge Road. They are looking for a place for the winter market as well. They have been fortunate to have these locations outdoors to promote safety of the participants, but keeping the market going. President Michael asked if the mall would be available again for the winter. Ms. Kowalczyk expressed that there are some issues with that, which is why they are looking. At the mall they would have to limit the number of people who attend.

Mr. Smith conveyed that the CIC met on Friday and talked about longer term planning for East Wilson Bridge Road, and information should be coming in front of

Council pretty soon. Additionally, there was a presentation regarding redevelopment planning of the Worthington Mall and so forth. He wondered if there were still plans to promote some educational sessions about the budget through the next couple months.

Ms. Dorothy shared that the McConnell Arts Center hosted performances this past week, and she knows many in the community were able to enjoy the music. The Arts Center is now open and the artwork inside is open. There are some limited classes available with social distancing. The arts are a group that have been severely harmed by COVID and it is important to have arts in our community.

Mr. Robinson asked Mr. Bucher how many points 25% is equal to. Mr. Bucher replied it is approximately 400 away. A lot more participation is going to be key. Some of these actions are single points and very easy, others are worth more points. Mr. Robinson commented that he wanted to affirm Mr. Smith's suggestion to increase the financial contribution to the Resource Pantry. Even though the dollar amount ended up being less, Council shares the desire to feed the hungry and next year we will do that.

President Michael reported she also attended the CIC meeting and saw the presentation with Building Worthington's Future about the mall redevelopment. It is wonderful that the new owners of the Worthington Mall are getting out in the community and reaching out to groups and organizations to show their plan and get feedback.

Other

Executive Session

9. Executive Session

Minutes:

MOTION: Ms. Dorothy moved, seconded by Mr. Smith to go into executive session for the purpose of compensation of personnel.

Vote results: Ayes: 7 / Nays: 0

Council at 8:45 p.m. from the Regular meeting session.

MOTION: Ms. Kowalczyk moved, seconded by Mr. Bucher to return to open session at 9:07 p.m.

Vote results: Ayes: 7 / Nays: 0

Adjournment

10. Motion to Adjourn

Minutes:

MOTION: Ms. Dorothy moved, seconded by Mr. Robinson to adjourn.

President Michael declared the meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Contact: D. Kay Thress, Clerk of Council (Kay.Thress@worthington.org 614-436-3100) | Minutes
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/s/ Ethan C. Barnhardt
Management Assistant

/s/ Bonnie D. Michael
Council President