



City Council Agenda

Minutes

Monday, November 9, 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, November 9, 2020, via Microsoft Teams videoconference. President Michael called the meeting to order at or about 7:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Minutes:

Members Present: Peter Bucher, Rachael Dorothy, Beth Kowalczyk, Scott Myers, David Robinson, Doug Smith and Bonnie Michael

Member(s) Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Matt Greeson, Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Assistant City Manager/Economic Development Director David McCorkle, 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, IT Director Gene Oliver, 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. Community Visioning Report

Minutes:

President Michael thanked the Visioning Committee members for the time, hard work, and their dedication to our City. We can't thank you enough. We appreciate all that you have done and are looking forward to hearing the results.

Mr. Greeson shared that we owe a debt of gratitude to those who have joined the meeting this evening and who have spent the last thirteen months serving their community in a volunteer capacity by trying to discern a vision for our great City. He intends to turn the meeting over to Chairman of the Visioning Committee, Joe Sherman but before doing that he wants to talk a little bit about process. He believes tonight they will present the visioning statements and overview the process that they undertook to arrive at those. Later Council will receive the totality of that report and staff will bring back a resolution where you can vote to accept the report and adopt the vision statements. He thanked Mr. Sherman and the entire committee for their outstanding work and invited him to address Council.

Mr. Sherman thanked Mr. Greeson and President Michael for their comments. He shared that joining him this evening is the Vice Chair Austin Mitchell as well as the other members of the committee, which Council will meet in a few minutes. This evening they will be presenting an overview of the Visioning project. On February 19, 2019 City Council passed Resolution No. 10-2019 (As Amended) where they committed to a citizen led process to move on to June 26th with appointing the thirteen Worthington residents to serve on the Visioning Committee. The Committee's job was to steer our citizens in a visioning process. They kicked off their organizational meeting on August 19th. In the last fifteen months they have held over one hundred meetings encompassing seven hundred and seventy hours and here they are today. With all looking forward as an avid listener and not as an advocate, they heard from an engaged community sharing their common interest, attitudes, and goals as they described their future of change and growth. It became clear the importance of looking at things from different perspectives. The ways that you do things is not the only way to do them. When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at can also change. This evening we have a high-level overview of what they have heard. He introduced the members of the Visioning Committee as Laura Abu-Absi, Kathryn Burris, Catey Corl, Paul Cynkar, Cynthia Findlay, Matthew Lees, Jon Melchi, Linda Mercadante, Austin Mitchell, Don Motley, Beth Sommer, and Graham Wood. Each of them gladly volunteered their time for the good of the community. They all have different talents, and they gave those to this visioning process. They would also like to commend City Council for putting together a great team. Another big thank you has to go to Robyn Stewart, Anne Brown, and Ethan Barnhardt from the City who provided countless hours in technical support and a special thank you to our consultant project manager Lauren Falcone with Poggemeyer Design Group for her guidance, foresight, and direction throughout the process. He invited Ms. Falcone to comment.

Ms. Falcone shared that at the beginning of the process we told the group this would be like a roller coaster ride with ups and downs, twists and turns but at the end of the ride you were glad you rode it although it did take many hours and meetings. We are

at the end of the ride and Poggemeyer has really enjoyed assisting the committee, city staff and the members of the Worthington community. When you think of how many people we talked to, heard from, and touched with our outreach, it was a very large-scale project. Today one of her co-workers was reading the visionings and was giving her the kudos. She commented that the credit belongs to the community members of Worthington who participated in the process and the Visioning Committee who put those thoughts to one voice. Visioning has a bright future with implementation, and we look forward to sharing the visions with Council tonight. Mr. Sherman thanked the public. There were so many community members who took time to attend public meetings, provide written comments and generally let us pick their brains on this visioning effort. He turned the presentation over to Austin Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell thanked Council for the opportunity to be here. He would like to provide a high-level view of the process. This should be a reminder of what we did to build community awareness, what were the opportunities we provided for the community to engage and ultimately what was it that led us to the vision statements that they will present this evening.

Community Awareness - what was great about the committee approach is that we were intentional about the different ways that people interact and where they get their information. It involved putting postcards around Worthington and being at the Farmer's Market and putting signs around the community. It also involved mailing 6,000 postcards to every address in the City of Worthington, advertising upcoming focus groups, as well as opportunities to take the public survey. If you are on social media and you are associated with the zip code 43085, no doubt you received one of their social media ads over the last six months. We used these ads and were constantly tweaking them to drive the community to engage in where we were in the process. Everything that we were doing related to Community Awareness was ultimately getting people to engage in the process.

When talking about engagement, we are talking about getting the community to tell us why they moved here. To tell us what they love about Worthington or what they would like to see changed. To help paint for us a picture of the future. They started small, working with some selected stakeholders that the committee identified. Then they broadened the scope and began talking to those who applied to be on the Visioning Committee, Council candidates as well as Council members. They held virtual discussions with various civic groups. They also created a platform, which was one of their goals at the start, that enabled people to enact with the Visioning process at any moment in time. It was the place where they would take what they heard from the community and put it back out to the community to get feedback. They would reflect on current events and start discussions.

They undertook Community Engagement in a virtual setting. There were four SOAR Workshops that had 72 residents moving virtual sticky notes around a computer screen. They had a total of eight focus groups that included 150 residents. The focus groups were used to dive into topics related to demographics, inclusion, and diversity. Lastly were the public survey and student survey. This was an opportunity for them to

get some depth on some issues and talk with people in tactical ways about those things they love or would want to change about the community.

So, there were multiple ways for people to engage in this process while providing a great amount of information and insight on key themes. What were they hearing from the community? They focused on the key things that kept reoccurring. They used that to begin the process of drafting their vision statements. They sent out that draft to the entire community. They tried to include everything they heard on eight pages. It was great to hear the community's reaction, good, bad, or otherwise, they got the feedback they needed to sharpen their pencils and begin to innovate and send drafts out to various groups. That was the process they have been going through over the last couple of months to get some last finishing touches on these visioning statements. So that was a high-level overview of the process and some of the community activities that were utilized. He invited questions/comments.

Mr. Robinson thanked the group for their incredible effort. He asked a question about the vision statements and the drafting of those and an important decision that they made early on to draft statements that were more amenable to agreement amongst folks. Mr. Mitchell shared that when they were looking at the information, they received through the community engagement, their focus was understanding what things unite us and bring us together as a community. It was around seeking consensus around what people aspire to in the future. He thinks that was always their lens, understanding and constantly re-testing that. One of the things that stands out to him in this process is that in these last couple of months, it was common place within their discussion to say, did we hear it like that from the community or did we hear it another way? They felt really comfortable testing each other and it was remarkable because anytime you get thirteen cooks in the kitchen, working virtually, on a single document with people with different perspectives on everything, it became sort of an amazing process where we provided that internal dialog that refined and really clarified what it was that we heard from the community. That effort and what they heard from the community is why they feel good about where they have landed today. He added that they were intentional in ensuring that all demographics had to be represented for this to work. He thinks that data bares that out.

Mr. Bucher added his thanks to the committee. He knows they invested countless hours and the broad outreach effort went well even while being done virtually. He appreciates them being able to adapt and keep the mission going.

Continuing, Mr. Mitchell shared that they have eight visions, 4-6 supporting principles and a list of action items. Visions are their articulation of what the community aspires to in the future. The supporting principles are essential to see these visions become a reality. Another cool thing about this process is that the engagement with the community and hearing from thousands of people, you get a lot of really good ideas. People had different approaches on how to make a Vision become a reality. Action items are all the great things they heard through this process and keep them associated with a Vision. They are ideas that we might look to down the road to

answer the question of how we make this Vision come to life. All the great ideas we've heard, will be captured in the report.

Mr. Sherman reported that after much re-working by the Visioning Committee, this became our overarching vision statement. What we heard from the community is what they want to be in five, ten, and twenty years down the road, even if some portions are currently happening in Worthington or are not happening. What we have heard and what we have said is:

Worthington is a vibrant community. It is where tradition truly does meet tomorrow. It is a community that welcomes us all and is among central Ohio's most livable, viable and memorable communities. It is this sense of community that is cultivated and preserved above all else because our future rests in each other.

Ms. Abu-Absi commented that she would be reading the Visioning statement. She will give Council members time to read through the bulleted principles and she then will share some notes in terms of how they finalized this.

The following are the Vision Statements:

1) Worthington is a Diverse and Equitable Community (shared by Ms. Abu-Absi)
Worthington welcomes people across age, race, gender, ethnicity, orientation, gender expression, abilities, income, religion and politics. We are committed to systems, processes, resources, employment and public services that are accessible and fair for all. We recognize inequities and actively work to overcome biases and injustices that create barriers to full inclusion within our community. Diversity strengthens the social fabric of Worthington as we build authentic, lasting relationships and care for one another.

Ms. Abu-Absi noted that once this vision was drafted and sent out in the survey, this was very well received by the public. Roughly 72% of respondents to online visioning agreed with this vision. Overall, people asked that this be more inspirational and less vague.

Members of the public provided many good ideas for action items, one included large-scale events and year-long promotion of diversity. The majority of those who disagreed with this statement were disagreeing on the basis that this wasn't happening today and they are not sure how it can happen in the future but overall agree that this is where we want to go.

2) Worthington is Dedicated to the Vibrancy of its Downtown (shared by Paul Cynkar)
The heart of Worthington is a pedestrian-friendly, historic business district and village green that attract visitors and bring our community together. Planned by our founders, downtown Worthington is where our past, present and future are linked as it serves as a place of celebration, a niche of unique and local businesses and a hub to Worthington's other business districts and community assets. Old Worthington's historic character is paramount to our identity.

Mr. Cynkar commented that this vision and principles developed after the initial public feedback. People feel that downtown is our gem, it is our living room and gathering room. We need to preserve, promote, and connect it to other areas of the community.

3) Worthington is Connected (shared by Don Motley)

Community members appreciate walking their neighborhoods, biking around town, and the ease with which they can travel to work and other destinations around Central Ohio. Our transportation infrastructure – sidewalks, bikeways, streets and highways – connects us to each other and the region. We are also connected through innovative technology that offers personal, business and educational benefits to all residents. We recognize the importance of adopting and promoting multimodal forms of transportation and digital technology while eliminating barriers to access.

Mr. Motley shared that about 68% of respondents agreed with this vision/principle.

There were many positive comments, but sidewalks seemed to be where people disagreed. Many wanted to see the entire city connected, while others felt that sidewalk were not necessary in some places because of changes in tree lawn, trees, and cost. There were many action items for this vision including improvements to public transportation stops/shelters.

4) Worthington is a Model for Environmental Stewardship (shared by Cynthia Findlay)
Nestled along the beautiful Olentangy River, Worthington is a dedicated steward of its land, air and waterways. The parks, paths, woods, green spaces, and outdoor recreation throughout our community create a lifetime of memorable experiences. Our dedication to preserving the natural environment is rooted in our desire to live sustainable and healthy lives. We are a community that appreciates the splendor of mature trees, native vegetation and natural waterways.

Ms. Findlay reported that roughly 74% of respondents agreed with this vision/principle. They felt that the city is already doing a good job here. Not many disagreed with much of these ideas except those who felt that green space in the City was disappearing. She stated that there were many action items and she encouraged members to read those. She mentioned that putting recycling cans with trash cans in public spaces and examining the zoning code to make green practices easier were just a few ideas.

5) Worthington Offers a High Quality of Life (shared by Graham Wood)

Our community is committed to quality housing, services, and amenities for all residents. A stable and diverse housing market makes it possible for Worthington residents to put down roots and live full lives here, actively participating and contributing to the wellbeing of the community. Our strong schools, excellent city services, and unique cultural, recreational and entertainment offerings make Worthington the most livable and desirable community in Central Ohio.

Mr. Wood shared that roughly 63% of survey respondents agreed with this vision/ the principles. The majority who disagreed questioned how it could happen in the future if it is not happening today. Some other feedback was that they did not like some of the wording, so this final wording was reworked to provide a little more visionary and inspiring language that was requested. Some of the action items include attention to water/storm/sewer/electric issues, balance in development, increasing offering housing for all ages, and incomes.

6) Worthington's Economy is Balanced and Resilient (shared by Catey Corl)

Worthington is a community with varied, but interconnected business districts that

enhance and strengthen each other. A thriving High Street thoroughfare (“Worthington Mile”) of diverse business, retail, residential and entertainment options complements the vibrancy, character, and walkability of our historic downtown. Robust business districts from Linworth to Wilson Bridge Road to Huntley Road add to the economic prosperity and stability of our city. Worthington residents live and work here as employers are attracted to the unique features of the city and its diverse and skilled workforce.

Ms. Corl reported that roughly 63% of respondents to the survey agreed with this vision/ principle. They liked the forward-thinking energy of this vision, while still referencing history. The majority of those who disagreed did so again because it is not happening today so how can it happen in the future. They were having trouble grasping the idea of a future vision since it is not happening today. Some feel that there is no need for any more variety of business / goods / services, while others claimed that we had too many hotels/offices and not enough greenspace. Action items included the idea of a Worthington Mile, an updated High Street connecting downtown to commercial centers.

7) Worthington’s Leadership is Open, Forward-thinking and Collaborative (shared by Jon Melchi)

Worthington is a model for civic engagement where citizens participate, contribute and are heard on issues that affect their community. Our elected leaders carefully consider diverse points of view but also take timely and coordinated action to move our community forward. We set the pace for communities like ours and our government is known for listening to and responding to the voices of its citizens.

Mr. Melchi shared that if there is a theme that has developed over these it is that 68% of survey respondents agreed with this vision / principles. Some comments included the City is not here yet but wants to be in the future. This one captured energy and was an aspirational vision. There were not many negative comments other than it is not happening now so how will it happen in the future. Action items included working groups/roundtables to move the visions forward and an idea lab as a place to go to get information and find tools to get things done.

Questions or Comments Regarding the Vision Statements/Principles

President Michael asked if there is a conflict between two principals, as an example, economic development and historic preservation or historic preservation and sustainability, were there any suggestions on how Council should look at balancing those? Mr. Mitchell shared that everything they put on paper reflects most of our community. He thinks folks know that there are trade-offs. We will have to see change for us to make progress. He thinks that is really where they heard from the community at-large. They want to have a conversation. Let us use these vision statements to measure what we are doing and why we are doing it. There will be trade-offs but let us move forward.

Mr. Sherman agreed. He thinks these will set a baseline for conversation. It might open an opportunity for perhaps more visions to be heard. This is just a platform to start to build upon how we continue to build our community. There were different

perspectives, which is what makes this community tick.

Ms. Kowalczyk thanked the team. She knows it was a great deal of work and she is greatly impressed with the results. Based on her experience living here, these reflect on what she has heard and her experience, so she thinks they have done a fantastic job. She also wants to point out that many of these vision statements reflect what it means to live in an age friendly community, so she feels validated a little bit. There are many great recommendations that can move us forward with that initiative as well. She really appreciates all the work that has been done. These are actually very helpful. When you think about things they are not really in conflict. She thinks people do really want it all. It is very clear in our community that we want the best for our community, and we identify these things that we believe will help move us forward. It is council's job to figure out that balance.

Mr. Sherman added that there are the action steps that will be included in an appendix that will tie to each of these principles. They are actual quotes of what we have heard. Paul Harvey would say the rest of the story. He thinks it will be interesting to see how all this ties together as we move this thing along.

Ms. Dorothy added her thanks to everyone involved in the Visioning process. 770 hours is a lot of time and commitment to seeing this through and trying to reach out to as many people in the community as possible. She is excited that we have cohesive statements and is looking forward to seeing what the action plan is. She added her looks forward to seeing what happens in the next part of the story.

Mr. Robinson said he wants to make sure he isn't missing anything. He thinks there are eight visions in this report. Mr. Sherman agreed. Mr. Robinson shared that what he wrote down is Diversity, Dedicated to Vibrancy of Downtown, Connected, Model for Environmental, High Quality of Life, Economic Development and Leadership. He asked if he is missing anything. Mr. Sherman replied that what we are talking about is just an overview, the Worthington Future, where tradition meets tomorrow is also a vision.

Mr. Robinson asked if they are going to lay out what is the next step. This is a phenomenal report, and he can't wait to immerse himself in the language that they used. He asked what was next. Mr. Sherman replied that is a great lead-in to the next slide. The next steps will be a little different with the COVID situation. They will keep things online instead of in person. They will be posting the Vision Statements and Principles that they just shared to the VisionWorthington.org website tomorrow. They are working to finalize the report and a community rollout. They are working with Anne Brown and company to put together a video along with the finalize report. Then they will post the final report in December. That is the direction they are going to take this. He thinks we will find that the final report will focus on the process as well as the action steps and the community is going to be able to see in their own words. That is what they are really hoping to do, tie this back to actual comments that were said along the way.

Mr. Sherman shared some brave thoughts as we start to move things forward. When you are creating a vision, it is all about purpose. You are creating both a concept and foresight. Then you must follow through with that. It was brought up earlier but one of

the biggest comments that we heard repeatedly was we need to do something. We need to move forward. We need to make decisions because really what is the point in creating a vision if it is not possible to follow through? When you get right down to the meaning of the word succeed, you will find it simply means to follow through. So, let us continue to seek input, listen to others, and let's decide on the right direction and go forward with confidence and show everybody, yes, we are ready to follow through. Mr. Myers echoed his thanks to the committee. What a herculean job that you have done, and he appreciates it. If the committee knew how much weight council has put on your shoulders, every time someone asks a question in the last 12 months, we can say, we are waiting on the Visioning Committee. Now it is back on Council. You have done your job. He is going to be curious to read the action plan. He thinks that is where the meat of this is. He asked if we are going to have another opportunity to talk with the Committee in case members have clarifying questions from here on out. Once he reads the report is really when his questions will arise. Mr. Sherman replied that after looking at the resolution establishing the committee, we will remain together for 60 days beyond the presentation of this report. They serve at the pleasure of Council and he thinks with enough notice they will be happy to get everyone together in a virtual environment and entertain any questions or comments that members may have. Mr. Myers stated that he appreciates that. He hopes he can call on their expertise in the future because he thinks he will need it. Mr. Sherman replied that they can put their heads together and figure it out. Mr. Greeson thinks when the final report is done the best practice would be to have a resolution that does two things: one is to accept the report and two is actually to adopt the vision statements. Like the slide in front of members shares; vision without action is merely a dream so 2021 should be devoted to trying to prioritize the actions that we can pursue that would best fulfill the vision. The first step is accepting and adopting and as soon as we receive the final report, we will prepare a resolution to that effect. President Michael reported that members now have contact information for Mr. Sherman and Mr. Mitchell if they have any additional questions after tonight. She added her thanks to the committee and remarked that Council appreciates all their time, effort and the love they have for our City because you would not have done this without loving our City. Mr. Sherman thanked Council for the opportunity on behalf of the committee. They enjoyed their task and look forward to the work that begins now.

Reports of City Officials

5. Policy Item(s)

a. Proposed 2021 Operating Budget - Presentations from Community Groups

Minutes:

Mr. Greeson shared that the high quality of life in the City of Worthington that was described by our Visioning Committee and we aspire to in the future does

not happen by City government alone. It happens in collaboration and partnership with several not-for-profit organizations in our community, several of which we provide some funding to help accomplish their programmatic activities. As we do every year our three major partners not-for-profit partners, The Worthington Historical Society, The Partnership, and the McConnell Arts Center will present their budget requests. He invited Kate LaLonde, Executive Director of the Historical Society to address City Council first since they were listed first on the agenda.

The Worthington Historical Society

Ms. LaLonde reported it being a big year at the Historical Society. The completely unexpected year had many challenges, but they have been able to continue to move forward with preservation and education missions. They had the opportunity with the big schedule shake-ups to delve into some things that we never really work on. They continued with preservation efforts at their three properties; the Orange Johnson House, the Old Rectory, and the Jeffers Mound which had significant storm damage in June. They had efforts to clear trees and re-seed where the ground cover was damaged. At the Old Rectory they continued with their exterior preservation efforts and had the 1920s section towards the rear repainted this year. Their biggest and most exciting accomplishment was finishing the Orange Johnson Bicentennial projects, which spanned three years and involved the entry and most recently, replacing the brick walls with limestone and augmenting the steps. The railings went in this week, so they are really pleased and excited about that project, which received quite an outpouring of support both from Council and from our community. As far as programming and education efforts this year, their biggest project was to quickly turn around from March to the beginning of May and create a virtual Pioneer Day experience for the Worthington third graders who were not able to come on their traditional field trip to the Johnson House. They certainly are going to look forward to when they can invite them all to visit the museum down the road. They did manage to put together on their website a place where students could go and tour the house room by room. They had their volunteers help record videos to explain different things, share some of their favorite stories and things they would traditionally share during the field trip. Then they were also able to engage with the students in virtual meetings where instead of the volunteer going into the school where they would do a basket visit, they met online in their virtual classroom, talked and then hear questions. It was exciting for them to still be able to have that face-to-face contact and get a chance to encourage and stimulate excitement about local history.

Another big project that they have been working on over the summer that is usually pushed to the back burner is working with the libraries to add their records to Worthington's Memory. They have been able to add about 75 records which may not seem incredibly significant except that each record takes about 30 minutes to an hour and a half to add depending on the amount of research

that needs to go into it and making sure all of the details are added for people to be able to understand what they are looking at. This is a really good way from the Historical Society to be able to provide access to our collections, particularly while the buildings are closed. The site gets about 3,000 visitors a month and while records on Worthington Memory are certainly more expansive than just Historical Society records, many the scrapbook items come from the Historical Society's collections.

They also spent a fair amount of time, particularly early in the spring working on converting some of their established walking tours so that they were available on a virtual platform as well as creating a new walking tour that focused on African-American history. Those are all still available on pocket sites and are free. It is also nice because you can preview the walking tours through the website without walking, you can see all the pictures and read all the text. It is a way that people in Worthington and beyond can explore our history. We have a Walnut Grove cemetery tour and the Worthington historic district. Over the summer there were about 2,000 views of those three tours. So that has been a nice way for them to still engage while being unable to do person face-to-face tours.

Last month they were able to create an audio ghost tour. The ghost tour is typically one of their larger fundraisers. Since they could not do that face-to-face, this tour did have a small fee which raised a small amount of funds for the Society. It was nice to collaborate with the Worthington Community Theater who helped record some of their most iconic ghost stories. It was a nice event that was also organized by a student at the Linworth Alternative program. That was a nice way to pair with a few different organizations and folks.

Ms. LaLonde mentioned that at the end they did apply for a PPP loan that did help them offset the loss of income this year since they were unable to have many events or fundraisers. Just looking at how they can move forward until they have more events, both staff members have volunteered to reduce their hours so they can make sure they are in a good financial position going forward until they are able to ramp back up and get back to seeing people in person. That is her report for this year, and she would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Greeson mentioned that the Historical Society submitted a grant application for \$32,500, which is the same amount as they received last year. President Michael shared that Council appreciates the Historical Society and all the great programming that they do. We understand that much is volunteer driven and that they are very fortunate to have many great docents and volunteers that come out to help. The programs are wonderful. You can continue to take care of the properties and still be able to provide some meaningful programs.

Mr. Robinson commented that he wanted to give Ms. LaLonde a big kudos for all she does but particularly this year. The African American walking tour was profound and obviously extremely well thought out and articulated bringing

history to current events. He thought particularly during the summer, during the racial justice protests and those in our community who read and actually participated in the walk, it was very meaningful in terms of positioning Worthington's traditions with current events. Hats off to her and whoever helped craft and write the supporting text. He thought it was brilliant. Ms. LaLonde shared that she was able to work with the Community Relations Commission on that effort. They went through, talked through what was being presented, how it was being presented to have that good sounding board. So that was a great collaboration for the Historical Society to be able to work with such a wonderful group of people.

Mr. Smith added this appreciation and thanks for integrating the pocket sites app. It is cool innovative stuff there. He is curious as to whether the repairs at the Orange Johnson House and new front wall that the City helped fund went smoothly or were there hiccups on the project. Ms. LaLonde reported that the project went smoothly. They had great contractors who stayed on schedule. They knew it had to happen but most of them were thrilled with how much better the house looks. The house really shines with the new lower wall. It was a smooth project.

President Michael thanked the Board, the volunteers and Ms. LaLonde for all that they do for the community.

The Partnership

Mr. Greeson shared that next on the agenda is the Partnership. Members may recall that we had a reorganization about a year ago when they managed both the Worthington Partnership as well as the Worthington Convention and Visitors Bureau. There was a grant request for the Partnership of \$55,000, which is flat from last year and \$60,900 for the Convention and Visitors activities. That is the remaining balance of \$51,000 plus the projected 66% of the Hotel tax revenue from the Econo Lodge, which is about \$9,900. He invited those from the Partnership to make their presentation.

Sarah Mullen reported being in her second year as Board Chair of the Worthington Partnership. She is delighted to be here this evening. She shared that Board member Aaron Brown pointed out that this year was as if the light switch was flipped off in mid-March. The 2020 plans that many had were immediately turned on their heads and the organization was faced with the decision of how to move forward. It was in that moment that the Worthington Partnership acted with confidence, innovation, collaboration, and energy to help lead the way back for the community. Where did this energy come from? It came from their people. Their people consist of a 14-member Board of Directors all of whom live, work or own property in the City. This year they added board member Jeff Packard, who is the owner of a design and branding firm that is in Old Worthington, called Nonfiction. Jeff has quickly made a giant impact on the organization, specifically helping during the time of COVID and working with the businesses. The depth and talents of the Board allowed them to focus on

maintaining financial stability during these trying times. They shifted their funding model away from event-based fundraising to leaning more heavily on corporate donations. They assisted the staff in designing ways to be a resource for Worthington businesses and were both strategic thinkers and Boots-on-the-Ground workers for a pivoting Farmer's Market.

Shared acknowledged that their Board is a working Board. Their energy comes from their committees. Their committees keep them plugged into our community. They are an organization with a solid foundation and framework to make a good idea truly a possibility. One of the best examples of that is the Worthington Green team. This is a group of highly passionate and energized individuals including Councilpersons Bucher and Dorothy who led a very successful energized campaign that you will hear about later. A large part of their energy is their staff. She cannot say enough about the work they did this year. The Farmers Market shifted operations multiple times to be able to continue to bring fresh local food to consumers. Christine Hawks, Market Manager and Karen Chestray, Market Coordinator continue to lead the way in central Ohio Farmer's Market. The Tourism Director Beth Dekker was able to quickly pivot and show her broad range of talents by supporting the businesses at a time of great need. Lastly, Annina Parini again showed through her tireless energy and passion how much one person can accomplish. She invited Nina to take over the presentation.

Ms. Parini thanked Council for having them. She agreed with Ms. Mullen that it was like the lights went off in Worthington when they had to close. They did add great energy through all their accomplishments this year. The 2020 highlights boiled down to three: they only canceled one week of the Worthington Farmers Market, they had no Old Worthington business closed during this pandemic and they earned a large grant from AEP and Columbia Gas. Those are their three main accomplishments.

Where did they get the energy and what were they working on? They brought energy for Worthington businesses. Their tourism director was able to help the Worthington merchants in many ways, some of which includes navigating closures, CARES Act funding, and finding new ways to promote the businesses. They developed a small business support page to share information regarding closures. That received more traffic in one week than it did in the entirety of last year. They were the Go To Place for information and were proud that they were able to offer that to our businesses. Merchant support is their bread and butter. They host monthly merchant meetings and were able to help them navigate the CARES Act. Their close community partner, FC Bank held two different online Zoom meetings with merchants to really walk them through how they apply for these loans and what it means for them. They were wonderful to work with. They invited a local attorney to share information related to the new employment rules and the strings that come with owning a small business and how that impacts employment rules. They also created masks required signs for

merchants. Again, just filling those gaps for the small businesses and helping to get them what they needed.

Their staff played an important role in the Worthington ReBOOT team.

Merchants wanted something to let people know they were open and that it was safe to come here. Working with Mr. McCorkle, they established the We Are Open To All campaign. They designed posters to that effect and then someone suggested having 100 flags throughout Worthington that said we are open, open to all and Mr. McCorkle said, maybe we can. The flags were immediately designed by our board member Jeff Packard at Nonfiction and the City was generous enough to purchase those. It was a dynamic display that attracted positive attention to our City. In fact, they received a note from the head of the Columbus Council on World Affairs who said, you know that is a wonderful statement. It is exactly what we want to see, that Open to All statement here in central Ohio. They were pleased it brought that kind of attention.

Ms. Parini reported that they also put a lot of energy towards the Worthington community and keeping them plugged in to the small businesses throughout this closure and through the pandemic. Supporting local businesses and making people feel safe. When they think of Worthington, they think safe. They are following the rules and doing everything they can to keep visitors safe.

The Green team has been a huge success story. The group of passionate individuals came to them and said they wanted to put energy behind sustainability efforts. The Green team was formed last year. This year that group worked with two utility companies (AEP and Columbia Gas) to enroll Worthington residents in the Community Energy Savers Program that not only saved energy but also generated small business grant money that businesses can use to reinvest back into their own business. It was a huge undertaking having to do this remotely, but she has received almost \$10,000 promised to local businesses in our town. They are hopeful that more people will take advantage of that as it was really a wonderful project. They hosted learn and grow webinars on subjects ranging from composting to organic gardening and native plants. Those were well received.

They put energy into our public spaces because people do not want to go inside yet. They convinced the City to allow them to use six picnic tables on the south Village Green. They provided cornhole games and local businesses sponsored bistro tables throughout the district. They produced Worthington branded face coverings. These small little efforts make a huge impact as it showed visual excitement of a thriving community.

They put energy behind the diversity inclusion issue. While they are not experts, they wanted to do something. They worked hard, again Jeff Packard with Nonfiction and several of the board members put time and effort into a comprehensive document outlining a way forward to achieving a more diverse and inclusive community. The Chief Diversity officer at Cardinal Health looked it over and was blown away. He suggested they share it far and wide because

please more organizations need to see this and use it. They have shared it with all the council members, all their volunteers and their staff has pledged to use it and live by it. They felt that was a great first step.

Energy was put behind tourism. The tourism world has had a terrible year as you can imagine. But the Worthington tourism organization is uniquely positioned because it is used to working on a shoestring budget. While others struggle with massive cuts, they have always been lean and mean and able to execute more efficiently than many other organizations in neighboring communities. Their blog is very well received. This is a great way to get information out about our local businesses and provide updates. While their main events had to be canceled, they have been able to have a couple of events. Towards the end of the summer they had a fair food event and the Oktoberfest. The focus was on takeout food, picnicking and entertainment that can be done with proper social distancing. They did a great Invited Travel where Malini Swank of Lakes and Lattes visited and wrote about Worthington to market to her followers and provided sharable content to the businesses. Our tourism director did a great job with the liaison and the blogger with links and content. She did a great post and there is a lot of attraction to that.

The Farmers Market is their corner stone event and where a great deal of energy was invested. Imagine we celebrated their 33rd anniversary this summer and everything that they knew about Farmers Markets got turned on its head. They were proud of the work that the entire board and staff did to make sure that this event did not suffer. After closing for one week, they shifted to a drive-thru market, which the Worthington Community Center hosted in their parking lots. They began with pre-orders and continued to refine the processes and share their safe procedures. At the height of their drive-thru market, they processed a little over 600 cars in a three-hour period. By mid-June they shifted the location to several West Wilson Bridge Road properties and transitioned from drive-thru to a controlled, safe walk up market event. Unfortunately, they were never able to transition back to the Historic District this year. They will transition to an indoor market in November. They received an accommodation from the Department of Health about their wonderful protocols, which they are very proud of. They appreciate the City and David McCorkle's work on connecting them with the two properties that hosted them.

Their energy was split two ways. They have a real responsibility to the producers, some of them have been with them for decades. These small farmers obviously are suffering. That is a business that if you close your shop, you are going to die. Things go bad. They need to get this product into people's hands. It is important that they have that access to these products and get the producers and the customers together. Our market always wins awards. They are proud of the accolades that they gain. Our market manager has done a great job of dealing with the markets. We are proud of that. We are still able to do data gathering surveys with the market. It is great to have that data.

A great deal of energy went into Partnerships as we can't do this alone. The Farmers Market was hosted by the City, Paradigm Properties and Worthington Industries. Their tourism director worked closely with the Historical Society to help create the St. Johns Cemetery walking tour and publicize the Pocket sites app for the walking tours. This is the first time they have partnered with Worthington Industries in their parking lot. We gave their staff priority in the customer queue at the Farmers Market and social media credit for doing that. They were lovely to host them there. The City of Worthington and the great work done with David McCorkle through the ReBOOT program. Council member Dorothy at one of their events worked the information booth.

So, where will they put their energy in 2021. It is hard to say. Hopefully, things will get back on track but overall, they are going to focus on continuing to devise ways to keep the business community healthy, seek new investors and deepen their board expertise. They are always looking for board members that have a passion for Worthington and so they will bring new energy and help their working board continue the big work that they are doing.

President Michael thanked the Partnership and its board for all the wonderful programs, creativity, and the resilience to bounce back after the lights went out. We could not have the community we have without organizations like the Partnership. She asked them to send a message to their board and staff and say thank you.

Mr. Myers asked what is her sense of how our downtown businesses are doing and is there anything more we can do? Ms. Parini replied that the ReBOOT efforts have been enormous. Every merchant situation is different. Some have suffered more than others. Retail is so hard, especially when we have such small independent eclectic business. It is hard for them to pivot quickly to a preorder pickup situation. We are doing as much as we can to help them. We have had several trainings and we try to get resources in their hands for any assistance they need. We just had some virtual training as part of the ReBOOT effort which is important because we are all virtual and how to take advantage of Facebook and Instagram. Our Tourism Director and one of our local media experts had a training with our merchants last week. We gave each merchant that attended \$500 to boost posts on Instagram and Facebook. They are doing okay. She has not heard that are close to shuttering. It is very tough. The holidays may be the make or break but many hold on until gift giving season and if that suffers then it may be a different story come January 1st.

Mr. Bucher asked how much was left of the funds received from AEP and Columbia Gas. Ms. Parini replied that they received \$40,000 from AEP Ohio. She has already committed almost \$10,000 to local merchants of that money. That money went directly to them to be used solely for energy efficient projects. The Columbia Gas money is handled a little differently. That is \$20,000 and they are still working those issues. She thinks the Board will put a deadline on that and if it is not used by the businesses to offer it to other community enhancing

projects. That will likely get kicked back to the Green Team to decide if there is money left over. We have had some great ideas on things the community could use. Mr. Bucher congratulated the group on all the great work this year. It is incredible how much they have accomplished with all the challenges.

Ms. Dorothy echoed the sentiments that have been shared. Ms. Kowalczyk added that as a Board member, it has been amazing to be part of this fantastic team.

Mr. Myers shared that this is a very different conversation than she and Council had maybe five years ago when they were all fighting for their very existence. Now we are falling over each other with accolades to you and your team. He thinks that is a tremendous compliment to her leadership and to the Board. They are positioned much differently than they were, and he appreciates her leadership. Ms. Parini expressed that it has been a privilege to harness the passion of the folks they work with on the Board and staff. It is a privilege. Thank you!

McConnell Arts Center (MAC)

Mr. Greeson reported the MAC as being the last community group to present tonight. We have their Executive Director Erin Blue with us. The MAC is unique in that they bring to life a building that the City owns as well as gives life to many other things in the community of arts. Ms. Blue is going to talk about their budget request of \$220,000, which is the same as last year's request.

Ms. Blue shared that she is happy to be with Council this evening as the second Executive Director of the Arts Center.

The fiscal year began with high hopes, innovative programs, the 10th anniversary celebration plans, a Decade Party, and new leadership ready to bring the MAC into its next decade. As a reminder of typical activity at the MAC, in 2019 they had 89,000 visitors, displayed the works of 150 local artists, held more than 200 live performances that generated \$3.9M in economic activity. The MAC continued to grow and while the amount of funding they received from the City has remained the same since 2009, they have successfully leveraged the funding and grown support each year. The City contribution represents 25% of the budget, with 29% through donations and/or public support, 26% for educational programs and visual arts and then 20% comes from performing arts and rentals.

We worked with Worthington school, community groups, along with local arts organizations to maximize engagement and creative program offerings. It can cross program between visual and performing arts and include educational components with the programming that is different from other local arts groups. We are more flexible and able to provide great engagement in ways that other groups cannot.

For our 10th Anniversary year, they received their third competitive PNC Arts Alive grant for the concert series. This was a chance to bring emerging bands into the light of day from the bars into a family friendly concert event. They had

food trucks. Only a couple of grants are given each year and the fact that the MAC has received three is phenomenal.

They also had continued success with their Swingin' Holiday Show. On Stage was Mad Mad Men which expanded to a fourth sold-out performance last December. On stage, along with the other great event that they got, the MAC chamber orchestra, new works of local composers as well as works from women of color. On View, Yanni Shane's exhibition took a Japanese miniature sculpture tradition and brought it to life on huge canvases. In Class, classes continued to expand with offerings in more than 15 artistic disciplines.

Then there was COVID. They navigated the pandemic as everyone has. They worked from home, canceled, and rescheduled and canceled events again. Through it all they managed to stay connected to their patrons in the spring and welcomed them back over the summer. The first exhibition in the gallery featured the work of three of our instructors which was a way to support artists while they are not able to teach. They interviewed each instructor on Facebook Live and had works in an online gallery for those that could not come into the building.

In August they brought classes back in plain air outside. They laid the groundwork on how to bring classes back indoors as well. Live performance was the last to return with their popular chamber and jazz concert outside and a new lecture series in October. Each program helps them determine a way forward through a sustainable financial model or at least as sustainable as they can get right now.

She also wanted to mention that the first chamber orchestra concert that they had was the first live performance that the Columbus Health Department came and audited. The guy was there with his clipboard and reported that they did everything perfectly. They were a model for the City, and he wished everybody would do it just like we did. It felt great to have that feedback.

So, what does this mean now? They have cut 40% of the budget. Staff has gone from seven to four and the City funding, which remains the same as last year now is more than 40% of their operating budget while during this time revenue sources are extremely limited. The good news is with all the reduced expenses and careful fiscal management, they can see a way through this pandemic with a balanced budget, given City funding and other donations and support stays at previous year levels.

What does that mean for the great statistics, 89,000 people, hundreds of programs? Their priorities are the same. This year their impact will not be measured in numbers but in stories. They have stripped away all activities that were not directly associated with their mission and the feedback has been great. They have had students who talked about how thankful they were to be back at the MAC and creating art surrounded by other people. One of their groups that rents from them serves people with development disabilities and one participant when she found out she could come back cried in joy. These stories are warming

our hearts. After everything they do, they are offering a survey to find out how they can do things better. 100% of people feel safe coming back. They receive notes of encouragement, donations from people who have never given before and something that was a surprise to her, they are not just getting their regular students back in the building but new students who have never taken an art class from them before. So there really is an opportunity for them to continue building new connections as well as continuing the ones they had prior to the pandemic.

The goals for 2021 are going to be to continue to work within the Worthington community, with local artists and the MAC patrons. There are a variety of ways to enjoy the arts. While the number of people in the building is dramatically less, the awareness of the MAC is still growing. She was recently invited to be on All Sides, with Ann Fisher to talk about how performing arts are opening back up. A couple of weeks ago, the MAC was selected to be one of the only locations to host the Black Lives Matter murals from the protects this summer and the only one outside of the city of Columbus. They continue to leverage the support of the City and the community and protect your investment in the MAC.

Why support the arts? Why now? They are \$41 billion dollar industry in Ohio.

There is in carryout for the arts. But as in-person events return, so will the local spending. Patrons spend over ticket price and they can bring that right into Worthington businesses. The arts are a comfort to us through the lockdown and they will bring new connections. 82% of Americans believe arts and culture are important to the economy. 87% believe the arts are important to our quality of life. 73% say the arts are a positive experience in a troubled world. The Black Lives Matter murals that are being displayed on the school's lawn have only been there for a week or two. Families are stopping by to take selfies. One English teacher said on her way to work, she was having a difficult day and did not know how she would get through. She drove by the murals and made the decision to throw out the lesson plan and bring her students to look at them. Last Wednesday there was no fewer than four elementary school classes that walked over and walked around and enjoyed the beauty of the murals but also talked about what they mean to us personally, to our community and to our future. One story, the teacher said she was going to take them for a walk but did not tell them where they were going. She was going to walk over and start the conversation. The minute they turned right from Evening Street; one kid yelled they were going to see the Black Lives Matter boards. The minute we hear the children outside, they run to go talk to the teachers and find out their inspiration with these boards. These will be up since Martin Luther King Day and they are looking forward to working with Worthington libraries, and the Historical Society to provide some additional meaningful programming connected to this exhibition.

Ten years ago, the MAC opened during a different economic crisis. The Worthington community supported them then and continues to support them

and help them grow. Together we will weather the storm and come out on the other side inspired and connected through the arts.

President Michael thanked members for all the hard work they have done and the great programming and having to roll with the punches when the COVID came. We just want to thank you so much for how much the arts adds to the community and the quality of life for people. Congratulations on your first year in successfully making it as Executive Director.

Ms. Kowalczyk offered her thanks. She thinks the efforts they have taken to pivot and ease back into things and mental health has been one of the top issues that people are feeling in the community. She can't think of a better opportunity for the arts than to help uplift people and connect people. She thinks it is so important for us to continue to support those efforts. She understands that the state has released a significant amount of money towards arts organizations. She did not know if the MAC would be eligible for those CARES Act dollars. Are you eligible or are you thinking about applying for them?

Ms. Blue replied that they are eligible. The funds are being distributed through the Ohio Arts Council and they are only being made available to those organizations that are already operating support grantees and the MAC is one of those. In fact, she did not hear about it when everyone else did. She had to ask why we were not included. Arts organizations that are part of a university or municipality were excluded from the funding. She wondered if they thought we were officially a part of the city of Worthington and that is why she did not get the initial e-mail. Luckily, she reached out to them and they did qualify. She submitted the application but expects that the lions share will go to the large art organizations in the state. CAPA Columbus is really hurting and are not able to do what it typically does. Cleveland and Cincinnati have organizations as well. We hope there are funds available for the little guys, but they just do not know how much that might be. The deadline was last Thursday, and we will find out within the next few weeks how they will allocate those funds.

Ms. Dorothy offered her thanks to Ms. Blue and the Board and the remaining staff members for organizing all the events we could do this year. As you said, the outdoor event was a great place to be as a community that was safe and then helping to coordinate with the Partnership and making sure people know that Worthington does still have a lot of activities and they should come out and in a part of the community. Having those different learning opportunities and art is a great place to help to get inspiration and a place that you can have improved mental health. Thank you so much for all the work you have been doing. Ms. Blue thanked Ms. Dorothy for showing up every time they send out a call for volunteers.

Mr. Smith appreciates the information. He would like to know more about the interaction relationship with the small community groups that the City used to provide grants to years ago that were swept under the MAC's umbrella. Ms. Blue replied that she is still getting her bearings where that task is concerned. She

thinks Mr. Greeson and she had an initial conversation in early March about starting that conversation and then COVID got in the way. She does not actually know where the funding stands for this year. She has heard from one of the arts groups that the funding applications were being held but she does not have any details on that. She know that there was a process that was identified for the smaller arts groups to apply for funding and that is something she needs more information about so we can move forward with that if it is still a possibility this year. Mr. Smith urged staff to rekindle that flame a little bit as well. Mr. Greeson replied we can do that. We will follow up with Ms. Blue and figure out where to go.

President Michael thanked Ms. Blue for the wonderful presentation and great work that her Board and volunteers, and staff are doing at the McConnell Arts Center. Ms. Blue replied that they look forward to having everyone back again whenever they can.

Mr. Greeson reported that we have made our not-for-profit organizations including the three members just heard from eligible for the ReBOOT program. They were not eligible for the first round but will be eligible for the second round. We expect applications for those as well in addition to their annual budget allocations.

b. Budget Department Reviews - Parks & Recreation, and Service & Engineering

Minutes:

Parks & Recreation Department

Mr. Greeson reported the next group of presenters are City departments. This will take us through the remainder of the departments. He shared that he had the opportunity to present about Government on a Zoom call with his wife's third grade class this week. He called the department of Parks and Recreation the Department of Fun. So, he turned the meeting over to Mr. Hurley the director of the Department of Fun.

Mr. Hurley agreed that they are the Department of Fun and like many of the organizations, it has been more challenging to bring fun than usual. He is excited that they too have improvised and as they reopen the facilities and serve the community and find ways to do programming and modify their events they were seeing more people engage and do so safely. They will continue to do so even as we lose daylight and weather. He is proud of the staff for what they have been able to do and have plans to do as we enter the winter months. We will keep Council posted on that as we get more and more of that going.

As far as their budget presentation, he wants to highlight the changes. They will have a decrease in 2021 in contractual services due to additional appropriations in 2020 for Community Center pipe repair and refunds. He is excited and proud to say that they also made a big dent with cuts in expenditures. It is going to look odd that we increased some expenditures in the bar graph you will see in a

second. Other departments have been highlighting vacant positions. There are two such vacancies in Parks and Recreation: The Parks and Recreation Superintendent retired at the end of March. That position is our number II in terms of providing oversight of the Community Center and helping to bring the Griswold and Community Center in line. They have been excited about filling that position but have been able to navigate with a little less going on in the department. They have been able to utilize Colleen Light, current Griswold Manager, and other folks to fill that void in the meantime.

The building maintenance position is one of two such positions at the Community Center. With less activity they have been able to put a hold over those. A finger over some holes and keep things going. That position has been vacant since this same time last year. They are hopeful to be able to fill that as we get into the new year and get more and more things going.

In the summary of their expenditures, members will notice a jump in 2020 because of these expenses that he talked about. To highlight some of their bigger things going on this year. They are excited that funds were reinstated for the Shelby Park Playground. They have a survey out in the community, which he believes has over 100 responses. They are gathering information to allow them to work with vendors on designs that will go back out to the community. That prepares them to have that project queued up when the weather allows as we come through winter. It is probably one of their most heavily used programs and a neighborhood park. It is very popular partly because of the events and activities they hold there, and they are excited about getting those improvements.

They also have coming up this year replacement of things in the Community Center. Some are routine and some are more capital. Several of those were planned for 2020 and have been pushed to 2021, including some fitness equipment, windows, and doors. There is a bigger project with some Diamond Brite surfacing that will be done at the end of next summer. As excited as he is sure members were to see a lot of mention of Bike and Pedestrian access in the Vision presentation this evening, and they are excited as Parks and Recreation and being a part of facilitating the Bike & Pedestrian Board, they have been really focusing since the completion of the Master Plan on not just trying to implement projects with the funding Council has provided through the CIP but also shifting into some more education and encouragement and so we were able to have a special events speaking of navigating through the COVID situation, they were able to still have a special event. Many on Council attended their educational session on Bike Boulevards. They have been excited about keeping that ball rolling and now with the funding from 2019, all of 2020 and now as you approve 2021 CIP, they will be able to dig in and implement some projects from that Master Plan. They will continue our conversation about Safe Routes to School. They are also moving forward with the implementation of McCord Park Phase 1 renovations. They have met again with POD Design to get them started

again. They expect to be out for bid this winter. They will keep that in front of Council as they continue to finalize design and make decisions around the budget and get that project ready to go. He asked if there were any questions. Mr. Smith wondered if they had any conversation about outdoor items such as fire pits and more warm stuff for outdoor activities. Any conversation about that type of thing as we continue through the pandemic in cold months. Mr. Hurley shared that it is interesting. They actually shared around the department a great article that was given to him about outdoor activities and as they have seen a huge increase in the bike and ped area, they actually have extrapolated that to their parks and rec thinking because they know it is safer outside. They have a hard-core group of exercisers that still meet at 6:00 a.m. in the dark in the parking lot at the community Center because they feel safer doing their workout outside. As a staff they are charging everyone with thinking outside the box on things. If we get some snow, we may look at things you mentioned Council member Smith. We will be looking for way to do things outside. You never know the weather in Ohio. He is sure they will have opportunity. Mr. Smith shared that while they may not fit the Worthington aesthetics, old barrels and trash cans make great apparatuses for fires.

President Michael congratulated the staff on the nice job they are doing on trying to reopen the Community Center in different phases to get it opened in a safe manner. Mr. Hurley acknowledged it being a challenge. There are those who say we are not doing enough fast enough while others say we are going too fast. It is a challenge. We feel good about how safe they are doing things and they have more and more coming back online, all be it in a very measured way. Mr. Greeson noted that they still have quite a few part timers furloughed and Mr. Hurley has done a great job keeping in touch with them. While those furloughs have been part of our cost savings measures as they had less activity, they are certainly conscious of the impacts of that operationally as well as families and individuals. The full-time staff deserve a lot of credit. They have filled in everywhere outside of their job descriptions. He appreciates those that usually work with fitness or with seniors who have watered hanging baskets and all that kind of stuff. Just getting the job done where it needs to be done with limited resources. Mr. Hurley thanked Mr. Greeson. He shared that they look for silver linings and one of the things is an appreciation for what other people do. He heard a lot of that from recreation staff after spending a day outlining a ball field or landscaping a bed to have an appreciation for our parks crew and vice versa. It has been great that the staff had the spirit to jump in and do different things. It is good things across the department for people to appreciate each other a little more.

Service & Engineering Department

Mr. Whited reported they lost a maintenance technician this year due to retirement and that put a hit on his staff, particularly since they are focusing on COVID disinfectant and clean-up and the CIP program going. They are also down

with our seasonal staff that do a lot of stuff to keep us up with baskets and the holiday decorations and a lot of things that can keep the staff busy on other pertinent items at the same time. That is their issue as that goes. As with the Parks Department, they are doing a great job of keeping up with it.

He does not have much to say about the budget, it is mostly flat across the board. There have been a few changes with the allocations to different funds, but the funding is virtually flat across.

As far as the goals for 2021, they have a great deal going on. There is about \$15M worth of construction with getting the Northeast Gateway Improvements moving and completed in 2022. Finalizing the Northbrook Relief and Kenyonbrook Sewers projects will take a great deal of time. Implementing repair recommendations, he talked about last week with the sanitary sewer evaluation study. The Police Station project (HVAC, mold mitigation, vestibule, roof) will also carry over into 2021. Mr. Treadway in our Service Department has done a phenomenal job of keeping up with that, including our contractors. He is excited to say that they will begin the design of the waterway improvement project in 2021 and moving to construction in 2022 in the Colonial Hills area and continuing to take those down over time. It would be nice to get that taken care of to reduce the hotspots that have been occurring with the watering system and a few other things. We will continue the comprehensive city building assessment, identify projects and inventory of our assets beginning with the facilities and the items there and moving on to other infrastructure that ties into our sub-assessment program to refine our policies and protocols and procedures to move forward with what they hope to do to just bring the departments to the next level so that they can just be as top-notch as possible. To be able to provide the best serve they can to the citizens. One thing he did want to mention, Engineering is focused on the design, review, programming inspection and coordination and G.I.S. inventory. Those guys are busy with all of those things you see here while the Service Department is taking care of our infrastructure, leaves, streets, snow and ice, baskets, and all of those different things. Given the magnitude of projects we have coming up in the next year or two, we are intending to use third party construction administration and inspection firms to help them out with that work to be able to do that in a quality way and have the resources to be able to do that. Those costs are included in the budget. That is something a little different from what has been done in his five years here, but they really need that help to keep up with the magnitude of everything they have going on. He would be happy to answer any questions. Mr. Myers reported having no questions but a gripe. He asked how come the Public Works Commission got top billing on the sign for the Northeast Gateway and we are all the way down at the bottom. We are doing all the work. Mr. Whited replied because they gave us money he guesses.

Ms. Dorothy said thank you for all that you have going on. She has been talking about water lines replacement ever since she got on City Council nine years

ago. She is excited that Colonial Hills will get some water lines replaced and she is sure because all the new updates will be coordinated with repaving or not repaving. She has been very impressed with how we have been staging everything and doing more for less. We are about done with that. Everyone is stretching their budget as tight as possible and she appreciates all the new life cycle effective costs he has been bringing to the City to help prepare and improve our infrastructure which is very much needed. She thanked him for everything he is doing and looks forward to seeing more construction throughout Worthington. Mr. Whited replied that staff appreciates Council's support through all the work they have been getting done.

President Michael added her thank you as well to him and his staff. Our City would not be what it is if it were not for all the dedicated staff. People do not realize what is happening with sewers and fixing sidewalks and maintaining traffic lights and we really thank you very much and thank your staff.

Mr. Greeson added that Mr. Whited's team, like Mr. Hurley's team did it with a little less full-time staff as well as full-time staff doing things that seasonal employees normally do during the summer. He thinks we only funded one seasonal employee, so they were down quite a bit. Everybody pitching in.

President Michael thanked Mr. Whited for his report.

Mr. Greeson commented that before moving on to the October Financial Report he would like to do a Next-Step check in with the operating budget and the Capital Improvements Program. We have done presentations on the five-year forecast. We have done presentations on the forecast for the CIP as well as the CIP itself, going through the projects for 2021 as well as the planned ones for the out years. We have now worked through each department. Our goal is to try to get the plan and the budget adopted at the first meeting in December. It would be helpful if Council members have any questions that need addressed, if you would provide them prior to next week's meeting, which is the last meeting before the final public hearing.

c. Financial Report - October

Minutes:

Mr. Bartter reported that members have received the October 2020 Financial Report. The one thing of note is he did move just under \$1.3 million dollars in expenses out of the General Fund and into the Coronavirus Relief Fund as we talked about numerous times. That did increase the unencumbered and cash balance in the General Fund by reducing those expenditures. He would be happy to answer any questions. A motion to approve the October 2020 Financial Report would be appreciated.

Mr. Robinson asked Mr. Bartter to repeat his earlier statement about the movement. Mr. Bartter reported how we received a little over \$1.3M in CARES Act funding, which by mandate from the Federal Government must be received in a different fund, which is the Coronavirus Relief Fund that was established.

We moved about \$1.3M dollars in expenses, predominantly wages of our safety services departments into the Coronavirus Relief Fund, which then reduces the amount of expenditures in the General Fund and increases the Fund balance.

MOTION Mr. Myers moved, seconded by Mr. Bucher a motion to approve the October 2020 Financial Report.

The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Mr. Greeson shared that he would also request a brief Executive Session to talk about Board and Commission appointments but that could wait until next week.

Mr. Greeson shared that he has begun to dust off all the Joint Recreation District materials and documents and will be pulling together a meeting with Council President Michael and hopefully school leadership and Swiminc. leadership to connect to the issues associated with funding the improvement of the pool complex that is run by SwimInc. That is because there is a need that we talked about before and the second is that SwimInc. was cleared to use the million dollars in state funds for consulting assistance. They went through a robust consulting process that Mr. Hurley served on the committee for as well as facility staff and others. It does not make sense to enter consulting contracts to further the scope of the pool project and cost estimates if there is not a vehicle to fund the construction. So, we need to bring focus to that here in the coming months. We are starting to spend more time on that again.

Ms. Kowalczyk commented that she volunteered to be part of that work as well. She will continue to be willing to do that if people think that is helpful. Members agreed with Ms. Kowalczyk continuing to be involved.

Council members decided to move the Executive Session request to next week's meeting.

Reports of Council Members

6. Member Reports

Minutes:

Mr. Myers commented that we went through a very traumatic week in this country and hopefully it will lead to resolution. He has seen some of that trauma in his own neighborhood. We have talked a lot tonight about diversity and inclusion and he thinks now more than ever we need to make sure those words are construed as broadly as possible. There is a substantial portion of our population that risks being disenfranchised and he can't say a manner similar to the way other members of our population have been disenfranchised but in their minds they have some of those same feelings. While he may disagree with their views he believes as a democracy we need to give their words an audience. He wants to make sure going forward that that we do what we can on the local level to heal the wounds of this country. President Michael stated if he has any thoughts on how to do that, please let members know. Mr. Myers replied that he is just going to keep his ears open and his mouth shut. Mr. Robinson reported that he is pleasantly surprised at his initial reaction to the

Visioning committees stated visions and principals. He really looks forward to seeing their subsequent work. His initial reaction was that they threaded a needle by embracing and capturing the key impulses and values of the City's residents and articulating them in a beautiful, creative language. He is excited to see what else they bring forward. Nicely done Visioning committee. President Michael thinks they all were impressed with the report and are looking forward to seeing the rest of it.

President Michael reported attending a leadership meeting that included County Commissioner O'Grady, Mayor Ginther and the Franklin County and Columbus Health Department talking about COVID-19. They asked communities to come together and talk about trying to encourage social distancing, masks and if anyone has other ideas of things we can do, they were talking about the statistics and how things are going. More importantly, she had two Central Ohio Mayor Manager calls, one was the general meeting and the other was the executive committee meeting. There are four pieces of legislation, two of which are critical and encouraging communities to take some action. She wanted to discuss these with members. The first is the ability for local governing bodies to conduct virtual meetings expires December 1st. That means unless legislation gets passed, we must meet in person after December 1st. The Central Ohio Mayor Manager's Association and several of the City members have been passing resolutions to be sent out to all the legislature encouraging them to get legislation in place before December 1st. With the uptick of COVID cases and with all those things going on, she knows many people are more comfortable virtual than in person. We want the choice open so as a council, we can decide what we think is best. That is her opinion and the consensus opinion of the Central Ohio Mayor Manager's Association. Grove City did legislation and sent her a copy, which she forwarded to Mr. Myers and to the law director so they would have the copies. General concept is if the council likes the concept, we can have something drafted for our next meeting. She wanted to know Council's thoughts.

Mr. Myers asked the law director if Council has the option to unilaterally, without General Assembly approval under our Charter or ordinances, the ability to convene virtual meetings on our own. He does not need an answer now.

Secondly, as much as he would like to be in person, he thinks for council to go back now would be irresponsible and a poor example to send to the public. Whatever we need to do to encourage that legislation and whatever we need to do to continue to meet virtually. His office is not going back until May pursuant to the Governor's suggestions. He is in favor of a resolution in support of any legislation they would permit us to stay virtual.

Mr. Greeson reported that we can have a resolution ready for next Monday. President Michael reminded members that at least four people need to agree.

President Michael added that the second piece of legislation is getting hearings is one in which the Buckeye Institute suggested and got a legislative sponsor to change the way income tax is paid to municipalities. There currently is a sunset clause as to how long people can work from home and their employer receive the income tax. If the sunset law is not changed the sunset is at the end of this year. At that time

employees' taxes would go to the City where they are working from (their home city). This is an absolute nightmare for budgeting. We do not know what kind of budget we are going to have. We do not know what to project it on. It will be a real loss. They are anticipating Columbus would lose \$500 million or something, an astronomical number. They have so many that work for companies in the city of Worthington that drive in from the suburbs. We have been encouraged to also send a letter or a resolution opposing this change in the taxation. She believes RITA has done projections on that. She asked Mr. Bartter if he had any information.

Mr. Bartter reported the easy math is for every dollar we gain; we would lose two. For every dollar maybe somebody working in Columbus, we would lose two. At 10%, that is a gain of \$924,000 and a loss of \$1.8 million. That amounts to a loss of \$845,000, 10% of the workforce shifting to working from home for extending time into the future. It is complicated. It is a two to one loss.

Mr. Myers asked if the Buckeye Institute is proposing maybe allow the temporary measure to expire? Is that what they want, or the temporary measure expanded? Mr. Bartter replied that first, they want to be able to receive a refund for the taxes withheld to Columbus for the time they did not work there. Big stuff.

Mr. Myers comments that it would seem to him, the employers right now would be opposed to that because it would be a dramatic change for them overnight. Mr. Bartter agreed which is why the legislation put that in there. If they originally passed this emergency section 29 House Bill 19, to try to change all of that as an employer would be a mess. Mr. Myers stated the provision sunsets at the end of the year. Mr. Bartter thinks it is when the emergency is lifted. Mr. Myers replied okay, then it would be up to the Governor then. He certainly is in favor of not changing things even though he thinks the General Assembly must come up with a permanent fix. He is not certain we will ever be back to normal.

Mr. Myers asked if we can have a resolution in opposition of that proposal by next week? President Michael replied yes, we should be able to because the Ohio Municipal League has draft language. Mr. Myers commented that he would support that resolution.

President Michael stated the third thing she wanted to share was that we received an email, the supreme court ruled central collection is permitted for the net profit tax for our businesses however the state is not permitted to take the half percent fee that they charged for their work. We are talking about having legislation introduced that requires Ohio to refund the money they took from our municipal tax money. We are looking at trying to figure out how to get the refund.

President Michael shared her last bit of news, is that David Collinworth, Westerville's City Manger is retiring at the end of the year. He has been Chair of the Central Ohio Mayors Manager Association and will be leaving. The Executive Committee can determine who is going to fill the vacancies and she has been named as his replacement.

Other

Executive Session

Adjournment

7. Motion to Adjourn

Minutes:

MOTION: Ms. Kowalczyk moved, Mr. Smith seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote. President Michael adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Contact: D. Kay Thress, Clerk of Council (Kay.Thress@worthington.org 614-436-3100) | Minutes published on 12/08/2020, adopted on 12/07/2020

/s/ D. Kay Thress
Clerk of Council

Attest:

/s/ Bonnie D. Michael
President of Council