



City Council Agenda

Minutes

Monday, January 11, 2021 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, January 11, 2021, 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, Communications Director Anne Brown, Management Assistant Ethan Barnhardt

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes:

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

Special Presentation

4. Columbus Public Health

Minutes:

Dr. Mysheika Roberts with Columbus Public Health expressed how she and Mike Fielding are pleased to join Council this evening to give an update on where we are with COVID-19. Since the pandemic began in March of 2020, there have been 98,736 cases reported in Franklin County, of those cases, 845 of them reside in the City of Worthington. Ages of cases have ranged from 0 to 100, and 5% of cases in Worthington have required hospitalization. We are eleven months now into this pandemic and we now have hope in the form of a vaccine.

The FDA gave emergency use authorization to two vaccines in December from Pfizer and Moderna. Both vaccines are safe and effective, and are available in Ohio. The Pfizer vaccine requires two dosages and is approved for individuals ages 16 or older, and is 95% effective. The Moderna vaccine also requires two dosages and is approved for individuals ages 18 or older, and is 94% effective. There have been many questions about the vaccines in our community, especially about how they got to the market so quickly.

She described how we first learned about COVID-19 in December 2019, and quickly learned that this sickness discovered in Wuhan, China was caused by a SARS virus. That virus was not new to many people in the scientific community. Since 2003 when scientists identified the MERS virus, they have been studying the SARS virus. In December 2019 when COVID-19 was identified, we were missing the fingerprints of the virus, which was then discovered in January, prompting scientists to quickly move towards developing a vaccine. Knowing we were in a global pandemic, studies and production of this vaccine were ramped up through support from the federal government. Research was done concurrently, which is a major reason the vaccine was developed so quickly. Clinical trials with thousands of people were completed. This vaccine has been approved for pregnant and nursing mothers.

In Ohio, the vaccine is being distributed in a phased approach, with the first shipments arriving in the second week of December, 2020. Columbus Public Health (CPH) received their allotment of vaccine on December 22nd, 2020, and have been going through the phased distribution plan as outlined by the Ohio Department of Health. Phase 1-A includes all healthcare and EMS workers, with CPH vaccinating 5,750 individuals. They have also redistributed 1,800 vaccines to primary care physicians, and federally qualified health centers. CPH is actively administering vaccines where they can vaccinate over 700 individuals per day at their site at the fairgrounds. The Governor has announced that next week the state will move into Phase 1-B, for individuals over age 65, those born with congenital or developmental disabilities, and those who work in K-12 education in close contact with students. Phase 1-B will be a phased approach, starting on January 19th for individuals over the age of 80, and dropping down 5 years every week. The next week, we will begin vaccinating those with congenital or developmental issues, and then on February 1st begin vaccinating those who work in K-12 settings. At this point in time CPH does not have knowledge about who will be involved in Phase 2 or Phase 3 and are waiting on the state to provide guidance. Vaccination is the key to getting us on the other side of

this pandemic.

Mr. Robinson asked about the number of cases and deaths within the City of Worthington. Dr. Roberts responded that there have been 845 cases and 44 deaths in Worthington.

Ms. Dorothy asked how people are able to sign up for vaccines once they fall into the guidelines to be eligible. Dr. Roberts replied that when individuals are eligible to be vaccinated, they can sign up on CPH's website at www.columbus.gov/coronavirus for an appointment to get a vaccine, or call CPH at 614-645-1519. At this point, registration is closed and has not been opened to those 80 or over.

President Michael asked what is the status for vaccination of law enforcement. She expressed that our police officers are putting themselves at risk of being exposed. Dr. Roberts explained that she does not know what comes after Phase 1-B, that will be something determined by the state. Health commissioners from around the state have been lobbying that law enforcement need to be included in the next round, and recommended that law enforcement advocate for themselves at the state level.

Mr. Robinson questioned if there was any sense about when the vaccine will be made available to the general public where people could come into a facility, without registering to receive a vaccine. Dr. Roberts described how she is optimistic that the vaccine will be readily available by late spring for everyone who wants it.

Ms. Kowalczyk wondered if there was an effort to reach out to the 80 plus age to identify any challenges they may have to signing up and getting to a facility for the vaccine. Dr. Roberts replied that was part of the reason they added the phone number system to register for vaccines. Many older individuals have technology challenges and they are trying to make it accessible through that phone option. Transportation will be a concern and they encourage people to assist those in need in getting to the fairground. Once we get through the majority of these groups, they are optimistic about opening up mobile clinics where a large number of people can get vaccinated. Right now, they do not have the capacity to do that. There will be challenges with mobile clinics, but this vaccine is very fragile with how it needs to be stored which makes the logistics complicated. The state has assured that the vaccine will be available at places other than just the local health departments soon, including at provider's offices that are attached to hospitals, and at Kroger.

President Michael asked if there is a Phase 1-C because she had a resident ask about that. Dr. Roberts stated that she was unaware of a Phase 1-C at this time.

Ms. Kowalczyk brought up how there has been a no-waste provision started, where you can sign up and if there is any vaccine leftover, you could be notified if you are in certain categories. Dr. Roberts explained how they cannot throw vaccine away, and on occasion when there are a lot of no shows there may be dosages that need to be given out so they are not wasted. They have tried to prioritize people on the no-waste list that are in Phase 1-B. At this point, the no-waste list is at capacity and no one else is being added right now. When the no waste list reopens, it will be publicized on their website.

Mr. Greeson explained how staff involved with the incident command structure are

here tonight to provide a brief update to Council on the City's response to COVID-19. The staff leading each of the sections will provide a report on their activities.

Assistant Chief Craig detailed how in the Division of Fire and EMS there have been over 95% of the department receiving the vaccine so far. They have completed training and protocols to be able to administer the vaccine when it comes available. The department is still operating under some of the guidelines that were established prior, but are hoping to return to normal operations as the vaccine becomes more available. There are still quite a few EMS runs for symptomatic patients, but their manpower and supplies are holding strong.

Ms. Stewart updated Council that the planning group has been coordinating closely with Assistant Chief Craig around the vaccines, and what can be done to assist with that. The two items that are still on their area of focus includes checking in with departments to make sure they have the staffing needed to provide services, and if there are plans in place for continuity of operations if there are illnesses. There have been some cases among staff, but we have been able to continue providing services in the community. They are also discussing activities and events that regularly occur, and in what format those events can occur.

Mr. Oliver explained how the logistics group has been focused on ensuring we have an adequate supply of PPE and cleaning materials to maintain safety protocols.

Departments monitor their utilization and trends, and there have been no issues to report. They also transitioned staff to working from home and enable the holding of virtual meetings. There are no issues to report at this time.

Mr. Bartter described how we received a little over \$1.4 million in CARES Act funding, the second report of how those funds were used was due to OBM on January 6. We have reported all of the dollars as used except for a little over \$16,000, that is encumbered for two pieces of equipment in the Division of Fire and EMS.

Mr. McCorkle brought up how Council did approve \$400,000 in total funding that is out and being utilized. \$300,000 went towards ReBOOT to support our small businesses in need. We have been able to support approximately 65 businesses using those dollars and the average business is down about 60% year to date in revenue. The second piece is \$100,000 that went towards not-for-profit community grants to 11 organizations in the greater Worthington area. Those dollars were prioritized for mental health concerns and financial concerns. Mr. Greeson added that he spoke with Ray Lees with Worthington Bridges who gave several examples of families that have been helped by the funds that the City Council allocated.

Ms. Brown described how in communications she continues to track, monitor, and research information resources provided by our health partners and state and local officials. She works closely with the public information and communications folks at Columbus Public Health. There have also been quite a few questions from the public that she has been answering, helping to direct people to resources as needed and finding ways to collaborate. She continues to update our coronavirus website with Worthington specific information along with important state and regional news. The updates are currently going out weekly unless there is something that needs to go out

sooner. As information about the vaccine rollout becomes more available, it will be a large undertaking to provide information and resources to the community. President Michael thanked staff for the great job being done and making sure that all the different focus areas are being looked at for the citizens of Worthington.

Reports of City Officials

5. Policy Item(s)

a. Financial Report - December 2020

The Financial Report for the month of December is attached

Minutes:

Mr. Bartter reported that we received a third Bureau of Workers Compensation refund of \$1,439,000 which brings the 2020 total of BWC refunds to \$2,373,423. Combined with one-time money from CARES Act funding, the City has received \$3,786,595 between those two sources. That is having a significant impact on the ending fund balance, and we are in a much better financial position than we ever could have hoped in March and April.

Mr. Greeson added that when doing the year-end report, that we may make some recommendations about one-time expenditures that would be appropriate given the availability of funds.

Mr. Robinson asked about the third BWC refund, and what portion is applied to the 2021 premium. Mr. Bartter responded \$133,000 was applied to the 2021 premium, and withheld by BWC. Mr. Robinson observed that not only did one time dollars help significantly, but also the year-to-date income tax collections are above the budgeted projections. Mr. Bartter explained that we had a strong December, and looking at the micro-economy of Worthington, we have not had a significant impact from the coronavirus impact on income tax withholdings. The businesses that have been dramatically impacted are not our usual, major employers. Mr. Robinson asked about what the future might portend regarding people working from home and if there is an update on where that stands with state legislation. Mr. Bartter replied that the big issue is the lawsuit pending against the City of Columbus that is in a holding pattern. RITA has made some adjustments to their forms to potentially account for any outcome of that case.

MOTION: Mr. Myers moved, seconded by Ms. Dorothy to accept the December 2020 financial report.

The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote

Reports of Council Members

6. Reports of Council Members

Minutes:

Mr. Myers explained how on this Thursday, the Municipal Planning Commission will have the first hearing on the Lifestyles PUD zoning change application. He wants to give an overview of how the meeting will proceed and what will be in front of the MPC

and possibly City Council in the future. It will be a virtual meeting, which presents some obstacles, but the itinerary for the meeting is that it will convene at 7pm with the applicant having an hour to make a presentation on their application. At 8pm there will be an hour for public comment. There have been 139 letters from citizens that have been sent to MPC members. The MPC memo has been circulated. The application itself is on the City's website. Public comment will be limited to 25 persons who can ask for a reservation to be admitted to the meeting. Mr. Brown went back and listened to the 2015 public meeting, and counted 20 or 22 people who actually gave comments. We have found people have gotten very good at consolidating their remarks and not repeating remarks. Given past practice and the courtesies of the people who present, and the ability to provide written comments, 25 persons was determined to be an adequate number. At 9pm, there will be a ten minute break before another 50 minutes of public comments. At 10pm there will be an hour of deliberation and comment from the board, and there will be no vote as is typically the case on the application. It will be up to the applicant after comments from the public and the board as to whether they want to proceed in two weeks, or go back and revise their plans to the extent they feel they cannot be on the agenda in two weeks. It is not unusual to have anywhere from two to six, or eight public hearings before a final decision is made.

Currently the parcel is a mix of S-1 and commercial zoning. They are requesting the entire parcel be rezoned to a Planned Unit Development. PUD is set out in 1174 of our code, and he recommends reading that code section to get a general idea of what is reviewed when looking at a PUD application. In the PUD context, the actual development text they propose and is negotiated by staff and the board, becomes the zoning for the property. It is guided by the City planning documents, existing zoning code, and the needs of the City. Their application seeks to rezone 37.8 acres, reserving out the Tucker Creek area. They are proposing 730 residential units, 24 single family, 94 multi-family townhomes with garages, 74 multifamily townhomes and flats, and 520 multi-families with a parking garage. They are also proposing 60,000 square feet of commercial and retail, and 25,000 square feet of medical office. If and when this comes to Council, Mr. Lindsey will need to describe what Council's duty would be. If MPC denies the zoning application, the applicant has the right to waive their ability to appeal to Council. It could die at MPC. If it is recommended for approval, it will come to Council which will have the final vote with a public hearing on the application.

Mr. Robinson asked if Mr. Myers or MPC received the questions that Councilmember Dorothy and himself prepared, consolidated by Ms. Stewart. Mr. Myers said that they did and the MPC has seen those questions. He would not be surprised given the time constraints, that all the questions would be gotten to, but they are aware of the questions that have been raised. Mr. Robinson said he had no expectations his questions would be specifically addressed.

Mr. Myers explained that if the matter comes to Council, that Mr. Lindsey educate Council about their duties to deliberate and vote on that matter. Some of the

questions while germane and pertinent do not address our standard of review for a PUD. When it comes to that time, we will want to be a little more focused in questioning at that time.

Mr. Robinson asked if he was correct that staff in their memo are recommending denial of the proposal unless LC chooses to offer substantial changes. He asked if it is wise or necessary that there could be a vote this Thursday in accord with staff recommendations. Mr. Myers responded that would be very out of character. He cannot remember another application of this significance that received a vote at the first hearing. It is the Worthington way to present the applicant with the objections, giving them an opportunity to cure and then come back. If the objections are lengthy, that is why there may be a several month delay between the first hearing and the second hearing. A lot depends on how LC responds to the objections.

Other

Executive Session

Adjournment

7. Motion to Adjourn

Minutes:

MOTION: Mr. Bucher moved, seconded by Ms. Kowalczyk to adjourn.

The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

President Michael declared the meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Contact: D. Kay Thress, Clerk of Council (Kay.Thress@worthington.org (614) 436-3100) | Minutes published on 01/14/2021, adopted on 01/19/2021

/s/ Ethan C. Barnhardt
Management Assistant

/s/ Bonnie D. Michael
President of Council