

Worthington, OH

Joint Meeting Agenda

Minutes

Monday, May 2, 2022 at 7:00 pm

Call to Order

1. Call to Order

Minutes:

Worthington City Council and the Sharon Township Trustees met in-person in Regular Session on Monday, May 2, 2022. President Robinson called the meeting to order at or about 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

2. Roll Call

Minutes:

City Council Members Present: Katy Brewer, Peter Bucher, Beth Kowalczyk, Bonnie D. Michael, Doug Smith, David Robinson

Sharon Township Trustees Present: John Oberle, Laura Kunze

Member(s) Absent: Trustee Tony Palmer

Also present: City Manager Matthew 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 Planning & Building Lee Brown, Director of Parks & Recreation Darren Hurley, Chief of Police Robert Ware, Chief of Fire & EMS Mark Zambito, Clerk of Council D. Kay Thress

There were approximately thirteen visitors present.

Pledge of Allegiance

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes:

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

Introduction of Legislation

4. Resolution No. 22-2022 Levying Tax for Maintenance of Union Cemeteries

Levying Tax for the Maintenance of Union Cemetery dba Walnut Grove and Flint Cemetery for the Tax Collection Year 2023.

Minutes:

Introduced by Ms. Hermann.

Mr. Greeson explained that this is the annual consideration of the tax for the

maintenance of the Union Cemeteries. Essentially, they are asking for a renewal of the 5/10ths of one-mill property tax.

Mr. Oberle reported that tonight we are here to request a renewal of the property tax millage and also to detail the success of the people in this room and who make the cemeteries great, as well as to provide updates on the work that is being done. The mission of the Walnut Grove and Flint Union Cemeteries is to provide places that are respectful of the passing of life as well as its continuation, a peaceful environment in which persons may grieve, meditate, and be renewed, and a staff that provides high-quality cemetery services. We are here because of the legacy of others and have collaborated with the Township and the City for nearly 164 years now providing cemetery services.

There are countless people along the way who have made both cemeteries outstanding, and they are hoping to build on that legacy passed down by others. Recently, they have been working to reach out to the City and the Township to conduct tours to see the cemeteries firsthand and overview of what is going on. While there has been turnover among the Trustees, we have maintained our senior staff. However, the secret sauce is the Cemetery Advisory Committee that is engaged, supportive, dedicated, friendly, and results-oriented. This group and their experience contribute so much to making sure that decisions for the cemetery are sound.

One of the most special places at the Flint Cemetery is the Children's Garden, and this space was uniquely designed for families that have suffered the worst possible loss. A lot of time was spent designing this so that it is a place of honor, beauty, and comfort. Every family that has lost a loved one gets a saucer and cup, so the team does everything possible to support families in this situation.

For the budget in 2022, revenues are strong due to increased sales and the receipt of anticipated intergovernmental taxes. The Cemetery Budget was stable in 2021. Also in the fall of 2021, a new pay scale was approved to bring the wages of our workers up to today's standards. Due to the increased cost of labor, the operating budget for the Cemetery has been impacted. The continuation of the tax renewal is so important to continue in their mission. Their recent audit was also clear, so their fiscal house is in order, however, there are a lot of expenses coming up and they have big priorities such as the Flint Office/Gardner Homestead building stabilization and interior rehabilitation. This building will be their future home and will help build on the growth of the properties in the next few years.

This property is an important part of our local history. Ozem and Jane Gardner were part of the Worthington Society founded in 1835 to support the abolishment of slavery, emancipate slaves, and remove prejudices against Black people. After the home was built in 1850, he and his family become very active in the transportation of fugitive slaves. It is documented that they helped over 200 souls on their journey towards freedom. There is also a great deal of value in the trees in the cemeteries, with the dollar value of the Walnut Grove and Flint Cemetery trees being close to \$3 million. The trees also provide important value in the ecosystem, such as nutrient cycling and carbon sequestration. When trees are present, research shows that there

is reduced crime and increased health within the community. Upcoming programs for the community include the Memorial Day Celebration, participation in Juneteenth, and A Time of Reflection and Community Gathering for September 11th.

Ms. Kowalczyk provided her thanks for the presentation and explained that during her service on the board she has learned so much and has such a great amount of appreciation for the work being done. The people who contribute to the cemeteries are so valuable and appreciated. She encouraged her colleagues to vote in favor of renewing this levy.

Ms. Michael conveyed how she remembers wishing how there would be something on Flint Road and pushing the gauntlet that we should be having something more than Walnut Grove. Over the years she cannot say how proud she is of all the people who have worked on the cemetery board and served on staff because it has been an amazing changeover and development.

President Robinson expressed how he will enthusiastically support this resolution, especially after observing the cemeteries firsthand on his tour yesterday. The cemeteries exhibit a kind of spirituality that he can embrace where it affirms the passing and continuation of life. They are designed and nurtured to provide a place for both grieving and reflection. He was struck by how we both have a historic and a more traditional cemetery, but we also have Flint that has so many features with amazing attention to detail.

Ms. Hermann expressed how the tour was amazing. As someone with a large family, unfortunately, there can be a lot of death and she has a lot of family in different cemeteries. One of the most comforting things she knows is that if she ever has anyone there, you know you are taken care of and surrounded by some of the most beautiful things.

MOTION: Ms. Kowalczyk made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 22-2022. The motion was seconded by Ms. Michael.

There being no additional comments, the motion to adopt Resolution No. 22-2022 carried unanimously by a voice vote.

Other Business Adjournment

5. Adjournment

Minutes:

MOTION Mr. Bucher made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hermann.

The motion to adjourn carried unanimously by a voice vote.

President Robinson declared the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

| Minutes published on 05/27/2022, adopted on 06/06/2022

Attest

/s/ David Robinson

President of Council

/s/ Ethan C. Barnhardt

Management Assistant