



City Council Agenda

Minutes

Monday, October 10, 2022 at 7:00 pm

6550 N. High Street, Worthington, Ohio 43085

1. Call to Order

Minutes:

Worthington City Council met in-person in Regular Session on Monday, October 10, 2022. President Robinson called the meeting to order at or about 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Minutes:

Members Present: Katherine Brewer, Peter Bucher, Rebecca Hermann, Beth Kowalczyk, Bonnie Michael, Doug Smith, and David Robinson

Member(s) Absent:

Also Present: City Manager Matt Greeson, Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Assistant City Manager Economic Development Director David McCorkle, Director of Finance Scott Bartter, Management Assistant Ethan Barnhardt

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes:

President Robinson invited those in attendance to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

He noted that today is Indigenous Peoples Day and that last year President Biden was the first US President to celebrate the holiday. The purpose of the holiday is to celebrate and honor Native American peoples and to commemorate their histories and culture, as well as continuing contributions to our society.

Special Presentation(s)

4. Worthington Mile Concept

Minutes:

Mr. Matt Gregory with Building Worthington's Future (BWF) described how he is excited to present this concept tonight, which has been years in the making and he introduced other members of the group in attendance tonight. The credit for this idea came from the focus groups of the Vision Worthington process. There were many people who felt the same way that we needed to name this area and focus on

connectivity. He described how in 2020, BWF engaged MKSK to come up with the concept for the Worthington Mile, with funds coming from several local Worthington companies. After the presentation tonight, they would like to ask Council to adopt a corridor plan that names this area the Worthington Mile and make it a focus of attention moving forward. This will help businesses feel connected as well as being attractive for residents and improving connectivity for people who come from near and far. It is not expected that this project would be completed all at once. It would be completed in sections and financed through public-private partnerships. He provided a brief overview of BWF's creation and purpose, and how their initiatives are supported by their membership, and not by outside interests. The only corporate money they have received is from local, Worthington companies to offset the cost of developing the Worthington Mile concepts. The Worthington Mile ties into many of the City's current planning documents, including the Comprehensive Plan, and the City's current development projects.

Mr. Chris Hermann discussed how the Worthington Mile came from the visioning process and overviewed the location of the concept from Worthington Place to Old Worthington and the connections it would create. He explained that there are two parts to the concept, which are the placement of street medians and a new shared-use path. He described how there are ways to make asphalt trails more attractive, showing different examples from other communities. The added medians to the roadways would create physical safety barriers that are attractive potentially with trees, irrigation, lighting, and signage. These medians help to slow traffic and are a visible element to help people be more conscious and provide refuge for pedestrians. He showed a conceptual design that has been created to illustrate how a median could be placed in Worthington and overviewed what potential costs would look like.

Ms. Brewer gave her thanks for the presentation and she is excited about the concept. She asked how long each phase of this project would take to complete. Mr. Hermann replied that it would depend upon funding, it could be separately or together, so that is ultimately up to Council and how this is funded. Mr. Gregory explained how it is anticipated that landowners in the corridor could invest in their facade and activate the greenspace in front of their properties, hopefully making the area more aesthetically pleasing.

Ms. Michael asked how much this would impact traffic since the medians and path would take up space. Mr. Gregory said that it would not take away from traffic and would maintain flow. Mr. Hermann said that with the shared-use path, the west side of High Street's right-of-way is wider than the east side, so this widening can be fit within the existing right-of-way and would preserve most of the tree lawn.

Ms. Kowalczyk expressed how she loves the concept and how it was taken from residents' ideas within the Visioning plan. It is forward-thinking, but a simple concept. She asked about the multi-use path on the west side of the road, and whether anything would occur on the east side. Mr. Hermann said that there would be areas to improve the sidewalk or to possibly bury the powerlines which are very expensive. Ms. Kowalczyk asked about snow removal on similar multi-use paths. Mr. Hermann replied

that typically cities are, or there are special improvement districts that take that responsibility.

Mr. Bucher added his appreciation for this concept and would like to see it integrated going forward with our planning and development.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked for more information on how this plan might be implemented. Mr. Greeson replied that a deep dive into implementation has not been done at this juncture. There are aspects of this that have been done incrementally previously and staff has thought through some of these concepts. These concepts can be implemented incrementally, along with leveraging private development to accomplish public improvements. This concept is not entirely different than Wilson Bridge Road and the documents that guide our strategy over a long period of time. We have yet to do the financial analysis, which would need to be fleshed out more.

Mr. Robinson expressed how he admires any group that puts its neck out by proposing something concrete and this is a really strong idea that is both simple and elegant, appealing to a broad cross-section of the community. In the coming months, there will be discussions on plans and this will be at the heart of that.

New Legislation - Resolution(s)

5. Resolution No. 47-2022 MORPC Attributable Funding (E Wilson Bridge)

Authorizing the City Manager to Seek Financial Assistance from Federal Attributable Funds for the E. Wilson Bridge Rd. Shared Use Path Project.

Minutes:

Introduced by Ms. Michael

Mr. Greeson expressed how staff believes that this is a strong application to request funding from MORPC for Attributable Funds, which are federal funds that come to the region that MORPC works to allocate for a variety of transportation improvement projects.

Mr. Moorehead described how this is a request for Council to support an application for the Wilson Bridge shared-use path. He recognized the community partners that have supported this application, and the next application, by submitting letters. He overviewed a graphic showing what the shared-use path would look like, traveling from the Community Center to High Street. The full scope of the work is about \$4.28 million and are looking at a construction season of the fiscal year 2027. The design work would need to be done in 2023.

Ms. Michael stated that this is a very strong project because of the connectivity it would provide. Mr. Moorehead agreed that it is a competitive application amongst the entire group of applications.

MOTION: Ms. Hermann moved, seconded by Ms. Brewer to adopt Resolution No. 47-2022.

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote

6. Resolution No. 48-2022 MORPC Attributable Funding (Worthington Mile)

Authorizing the City Manager to Seek Financial Assistance from Federal Attributable Funds for the Worthington Mile Shared use path Project.

Minutes:

Introduced by Ms. Brewer

Mr. Moorehead detailed how this application represents a shared-use path on the west side of High Street and would intersect with the Wilson Bridge Road trail from the previous application. We stand a chance of being awarded both projects but will likely be asked by MORPC which application we are favoring, and feel is the strongest. This corridor is surprisingly open as far as right-of-way goes, with fairly minimal conflicts. The cost is projected to be \$2.8 million and is being requested to be funded in the fiscal year 2029 to help alleviate the local match that will be required.

MOTION: Ms. Michael moved, seconded by Ms. Kowalczyk to adopt Resolution No. 48-2022

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote

Reports of City Officials

7. Discussion Item(s)

a. Overview - Proposed 2023 Operating Budget & Five-Year Forecast

Minutes:

Mr. Greeson provided an overview of how the presentation tonight is to provide an overview of the proposed 2023 Operating Budget and Five-Year Forecast and described the budget adoption process. As a built-out, older community, with a robust set of services, the 2023 budget again prioritizes maintaining those amenities that are expected.

Mr. Bartter outlined that the proposed budget makes a significant assumption of positive revenue growth in the out-years due to potential income tax increases, property tax reassessments, and potential increases in funds for Sharon Township fire services. There is flexibility built in for the Parks and Recreation Department, to program where they believe people will be and the ability to move dollars around. Parks revenues have not rebounded to pre-COVID levels. He provided a comprehensive listing of services provided that maintains what is already provided to Worthington residents, and where expenditures are made across the organization. 75% of the expenditures in the Operating Budget come from wages, pensions, and insurance costs.

The 2023 proposed General Fund Budget is projected to be 4.01% over 2022 original appropriations from increases in wages, pensions, and employee benefits. There is also an increase of \$250,000 for legal fees. The preliminary staffing chart increases the number of full-time positions from 147 to 147.5 for the addition of a part-time social services coordinator in the Division of Fire. There is also continued use of consulting dollars for Engineering, Planning, and digital communications support. The budget includes 3.5% wage increases for both union and non-union personnel and a 5% increase for health insurance. We pay for our services primarily through income taxes, which comprise over 70% of City revenues. Income taxes are projected to increase consistently between

3-4% each year through 2027, however, it is important to note that this is a difficult time to project income taxes. Increases in income tax revenues have come from the success of our existing businesses, and whether that success will continue is hard to predict. He conveyed that we should stay a little bit conservative, but we are going to have some positive economic development coming online in the next five years.

Mr. Robinson asked about the projections, how much of the increased revenue would be from existing employers, and how much would be from new jobs. Mr. Bartter replied that it is difficult to individually pick and choose, and we do not know enough to say what businesses are coming in and going out, or how much they are compensating with bonuses.

Mr. Bartter overviewed various charges for services that generate revenue, including Parks and Recreation fees, Fire Protection fees, and fees for Riverlea police protection. As we look at revenue over the next five years, we see significant increases through 2025, generating additional revenue. However, we are also looking at increasing expenses from wages and health insurance. You will see the General Fund balance decrease over the next several years, before beginning to increase again.

Mr. Greeson described how staff tries to nail down numbers early, however, there are some items that need additional work and Council direction. Regarding the potential sustainability position that has been suggested by Messrs. Bucher and Robinson, staff has not finished analyzing that prospect, and information will be distributed before being added to the budget. Staff is also considering whether or not resources need to be added to support the capital budget as well.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked if there is a consideration of resources for a consultant for the comprehensive plan update and housing study that has been discussed by the Council. Mr. Greeson replied that some unspent allocated funds this year have been held, as well as some dollars also included in this budget to achieve those goals. Mr. Bartter noted that it is about \$225,000 between this year and next year to achieve those depending on how much has already been spent. Ms. Kowalczyk said looking at projections and our healthy fund balance, and new potential staff members, she knows we are a lean operation and when looking at some of the policy changes that the Council would like to see made, she asked if there are other in-house positions, we should be potentially thinking about with those dollars to help move us forward. Mr. Greeson replied that he would put some final thoughts together as food for thought.

Reports of Council Members

8. Reports of Council Members

Minutes:

Ms. Hermann provided an update on the most recent Community Improvement

Corporation meeting, where RFPs were overviewed for the property owned along East Wilson Bridge Road. Those proposals will continue to be discussed at the next meeting in November.

Mr. Robinson asked if those proposals are available online for the public to view. Mr. McCorkle confirmed that they would be shortly.

Mr. Bucher noted that he would like an update on the potential Parks Foundation, as well as Deer Management.

Ms. Kowalczyk provided an update on upcoming Worthington Partnership events.

Ms. Michael noted that the CIC also approved resolutions supporting the MORPC grant applications for East Wilson Bridge Road and the Worthington Mile.

Ms. Brewer gave an update on the upcoming MPC/ARB meeting. She voiced her continued support for research on the sustainability project based on some of the presentations we have seen about involvement at the local level.

Ms. Hermann gave thanks to everyone who was at Market Day, making that event successful.

Mr. Robinson reminded Councilmembers of the upcoming ribbon cutting at McCord Park and thanked Mr. Bucher for bringing up the Parks Foundation and deer issues for consideration.

Other Business

Executive Session

9. Executive Session

Minutes:

MOTION: Ms. Michael moved, seconded by Ms. Brewer to enter executive session for the purposes of discussing land acquisition and the appointment of personnel.

The clerk called the roll on Executive Session with the motion carrying unanimously by a roll call vote. Council recessed at 8:21 p.m. from the Regular meeting session.

Council returned to open session at 8:56 p.m.

Adjournment

10. Motion to Adjourn

Minutes:

MOTION: Ms. Michael moved, Ms. Brewer seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion carried by a voice vote.

President Robinson declared the meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Contact: D. Kay Thress, Clerk of Council (Kay.Thress@worthington.org (614) 436-3100) | Minutes published on 10/28/2022, adopted on 11/07/2022

/s/ Ethan C. Barnhardt

Management Assistant

Attest

/s/ David Robinson

President of Council