

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
October 4, 2010

I. ROLL CALL & ORDERING OF AGENDA

Acting President David Silvestri called the regular meeting of Wooster City Council to order at 7:30 p.m. in council chambers by asking everyone to rise and join in the Pledge of Allegiance. The following members were present: Jon Ansel, Mike Buytendyk, Mark Cavin, David Silvestri, Jeff Steiner and Jon Ulbright. Barbara Knapic was absent.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ansel moved, seconded by Mr. Cavin, to approve minutes of the September 20, 2010 meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

III. COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR/ADMINISTRATION

Mayor Breneman, updated council on various activities in the city: 1) The search for director of administration is moving forward; 2) In-house interviews have been taking place in the divisions which have job openings; 3) The police (OPBA) and fire (IAFF) unions current collective bargaining agreements expire 12/31/10 and they have successfully negotiated extensions of their contracts through 3/31/12, agreeing to freeze their wages. The mayor acknowledged members of the unions attending the meeting and offered his sincere thanks saying it truly is a very good situation for the city.

IV. PETITIONS/COMMUNICATIONS FROM PUBLIC (none)

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS; PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mr. Ulbright reported on the Public Infrastructure Committee meeting held at 6:30 p.m. in council chambers prior to the regular council meeting. Three main topics were discussed: 1) Proposed ordinance amendments to Codified Ordinances 905 Trees, Tree Lawns and Weeds and 351.03 Prohibited Standing or Parking Places. Mr. Ulbright feels the proposed changes will make these laws clearer and more enforceable. The committee requested the proposed changes be put on the next council agenda. 2) Joel Montgomery discussed the planned state and federal funded infrastructure improvement projects for 2010 through 2015. A meeting allowing for public input is mandated when the city accepts state or federal funds. 3) Mr. Montgomery reviewed findings of a committee regarding safe routes to school in the city. The number one priority was sidewalks.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2010-73 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE OHIO PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION STATE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND/OR LOCAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM(S) AND TO EXECUTE CONTRACTS AS REQUIRED (Ulbright)

Mr. Ulbright referred to a scaled drawing showing South Street with the suggested improvements and visuals of a proposed archway. The city is applying for participation in the Ohio Public Works Commission State Capital Improvement Fund for the South and Walnut Street parking improvement project. The total cost of the project is \$939,000 and if approved, the OPWC grant would fund \$500,000 of the cost. The application would be for the year 2011 construction, and the city portion would be budgeted in 2011. The Ohio Cultural Facilities Commission (OCFC) has already designated \$170,000 in grant funds for the South Street portion of the project. The remaining \$269,000 would be funded either by city capital improvement funds or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Mr. Ulbright said the project would make necessary changes to South Street with improvements to waterlines, storm and sewer repairs and street repairs. The overall project is an effort to promote a campus concept between the Wayne County Public Library, Wayne Center for the Arts and the Red Cross, which would improve pedestrian safety. In addition this program would provide funding for the Freedlander block revitalization, restoring

the streetscape on Liberty and Walnut Streets, including the parking lot on Walnut. The administration is combining these projects in order to increase the amount of funding received from the state. Mr. Montgomery explained that all of the aesthetic improvements (the arch, signage, landscaping, etc.) to South Street will be paid for through the \$170,000 OCFC grant. The designated funding coming from the city's capital improvements fund would be used for improvements to waterlines, sidewalks, pavement, curbs, etc. Theoretically, Mr. Montgomery said the project could be done without any cost to the city. There is a \$100,000 CDBG available, \$100,000 contingency fees factored into the engineer's estimate which may not be used and if favorable bids are received, that would lower the estimated cost. Mr. Montgomery further explained the rationale behind restructuring South Street and the various proposals considered. He stated this project is contingent upon receiving the \$500,000 grant from OPWC. Factoring in all the available funding for the project, Mr. Ulbright confirmed that out of \$939,000, the maximum amount the city would provide is \$169,000. Mr. Cavin said that while this is a very nice project, he questioned if this was the right time for the city to go into this with the financial constraints of the city. Mr. Ulbright said his intent was to leave the resolution on first reading to allow council members and the public to ask those types of questions and offer input. Mr. Ansel stated he would be absent from the next council meeting and wanted to understand the infrastructure improvements planned for this group of streets and intersections in the next five years. He said the last thing the city wants to do is forgo \$700,000 of state and federal funding to save \$169,000 and in the next 5-7 years have to spend \$300,000-\$400,000 upgrading needed waterlines, sewers, curbs and sidewalks. The resolution remained on first reading.

Mr. Buytendyk informed the fire and police union representatives in attendance that it was not necessary for them stay until the end of the meeting and thanked them for their care and consideration about the City of Wooster. He said he knows most of them personally and they are truly Wooster's finest.

2. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2010-74 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE OHIO PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION STATE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND/OR LOCAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM(S) AND TO EXECUTE CONTRACTS AS REQUIRED (Ulbright)

Mr. Ulbright stated this request is to authorize application for and acceptance of grant money from the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) for the Market/Spruce Sewer Separation project. The estimated total cost of the project is \$440,000 and if the grant funding is approved, the OPWC would fund \$265,000, 60% of project costs. The remaining costs would be funded through the storm, sanitary and other capital improvement funds. Mr. Ulbright stated this project would install over 1400 feet of storm sewer and 20 catch basins, and separate storm sewer connections into the sanitary sewer. This project is the next sewer separation priority on the city's 10 year infrastructure plan, master plan for sewer separation and CSOP long term control plan. The project is required in order to reduce combined sewer overflows and help eliminate sewer back-ups. Mr. Montgomery elaborated on the benefits the city's water treatment plants have seen from the ongoing sewer separation projects.

Mr. Ulbright moved, seconded by Mr. Buytendyk, to suspend the rules and place on third and final reading. Upon roll call, motion carried unanimously (Ansel-yes; Buytendyk-yes; Cavin-yes; Silvestri-yes; Steiner-yes and Ulbright-yes).

Mr. Ulbright moved, seconded by Mr. Ansel, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt carried unanimously (Ansel-yes; Buytendyk-yes; Cavin-yes; Silvestri-yes; Steiner-yes and Ulbright-yes).

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Steiner echoed Mr. Buytendyk's earlier comments, thanking the police and fire unions for negotiating with the city and he too considers them the city's finest.

Mr. Cavin reverberated others' sentiments in thanking the unions. Mr. Cavin questioned if the city had received any feedback from citizens who were unable to hear the emergency sirens. Mayor Breneman explained the sirens

are specifically meant to alert people who are outdoors, not those inside of a structure. Communications through television, radio and other forms of avenues are to alert those indoors of impending weather. The city's two sirens are located at the corners of Burbank/Oldman and Gasche/Wayne, which are two areas within the city that hold large outdoor events. The mayor said if he recalls, the original plan called for six sirens positioned throughout the city for larger coverage, but the grants available to install the sirens evaporated. Any new sirens would be borne at full expense to the city which would be approximately \$150,000 each. Mr. Cavin asked that grant funding be used to purchase another emergency siren and Mayor Breneman explained each grant has strings attached dictating what type projects the funding can be used for. Mr. Cavin said he would like to see a grant for safety services. Mayor Breneman said the city applies for almost every grant it can, but the grants either have to be used for the purpose that will improve our community according to the guidelines or we have to give the funding back. For example, the \$170,000 funding for South Street cannot be used to purchase emergency sirens. Mr. Cavin again stated he would like to see the focus back to safety services.

Mr. Ulbright thanked the fire and police departments for their cooperation in negotiations and applauded their efforts as he feels it speaks to their dedication to forego wage increases until 2012. Mr. Ulbright agreed that the city ought to look into additional emergency sirens and see if any funding in that particular area comes available. Mr. Ulbright thanked everyone for attending the infrastructure meeting prior to council meeting.

Mr. Ulbright brought up another point of business. At a previous meeting council discussed and tabled the notion of reimbursing travel expenses to Dr. Bob Ross for transporting two council members on April 9, 2010 to Bowling Green, Ohio to observe the operation of residential wind turbines as a source of energy.

Mr. Ulbright moved, seconded by Mr. Cavin, to remove the proposal to reimburse Mr. Ross from the table. Upon roll call, motion carried unanimously (Ansel-yes; Buytendyk-yes; Cavin-yes; Silvestri-yes; Steiner-yes and Ulbright-yes).

According to calculations from the finance department, the amount of reimbursement for expenses incurred for the 275 mile round trip was \$40.00.

Mr. Ulbright moved, seconded by Mr. Cavin, to reimburse Dr. Bob Ross a total of \$40.00, from city council's budget, for transporting Mr. Silvestri and Mr. Ulbright to Bowling Green, Ohio on April 9, 2010. Upon roll call, motion to adopt carried unanimously (Ansel-yes; Buytendyk-yes; Cavin-yes; Silvestri-yes; Steiner-yes and Ulbright-yes).

Mr. Ansel thanked the fire and police unions for their cooperation and support, and also highlighted administration's proactive initiative to enter into these discussions. The finance committee spent a lot of time going through the peer review process, as did participants from the police and fire bargaining units, and Mr. Ansel believes it was time well spent. In understanding the challenges ahead of the city and the financial responsibility, Mr. Ansel feels there has been a major milestone in management and labor collaboration and the impact is significant. He thinks its important for council to take a proactive approach and continue to create public awareness. The funds involved with the wage freeze can be highlighted, but the Voluntary Separation Plan (VSP), with aggregate costs savings in excess of \$2 million, impacted the safety services, particularly the police department. The loss of two police officers through the VSP creates a cost reduction within our community that may have an impact to the overall quality of life in Wooster. These officers will not be replaced, bringing the authorized staffing level of 38 sworn officers, from the current manning of 36, to 34 with the additional reduction of two officers. Mr. Ansel feels it is important for everyone to be aware of that because there really is a cost as everyone is doing more with less. Mr. Ansel stated there will be a finance meeting to talk more specifically regarding the results of the VSP, the additional staffing replacements, actual vs. projected budget and what the forecast is going to be for the year ending 2011. He scheduled a Finance Committee meeting for November 1, 2010 at 6:30 in council chambers at City Hall. Mr. Ansel again expressed a heartfelt thank you to the police union, fire union and city administration for making those very hard, difficult and challenging decisions to serve our taxpayers.

Mr. Silvestri extended his gratitude to both bargaining units, police and fire, for not only seeing and recognizing the challenges of these times but also bearing their portion as well. As far as the community is concerned, certain challenges the safety forces face everyday are exasperated by the current conditions and even in the face of that, coming away from the bargaining table in such an honorable fashion is appreciated not only by council members but also by the citizens of the City of Wooster.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Steiner moved, seconded by Mr. Ulbright, to adjourn. Motion carried and meeting so adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

David J. Silvestri
Acting President of Council

Cheryl K. Collins
Clerk of Council