

**WOOSTER CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**1/16/2024**

**I. ROLL CALL & ORDERING OF AGENDA**

President Craig Sanders called the regular meeting of Wooster City Council to order shortly after 7:30 p.m. Clerk Amy Hamilton called the roll with the following members present: Mike Abernathy, Lukas Gaffey, Steven Huszai, Barb Knapic, Chris Malta, Scott Myers, and Jen Warden.

City Administration present: Mayor Bob Reynolds, Director of Administration Joel Montgomery, Finance Director Andrei Dordea, Law Director John Scavelli, and Deputy Director of Administration Phil Turske.

City Managers present: Police Chief Matt Fisher, PPM Manager Curt Denning, and City Engineer John Rice.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Abernathy moved to approve the minutes of the January 2, 2024 regular meeting, seconded by Mr. Gaffey. Upon voice vote, the minutes were approved.

**III. COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR/ADMINISTRATION**

Chief Fisher recognized and presented commendations to five police officers for their efforts to save the lives of seven people who had overdosed on drugs. The officers, along with two Sheriff's Deputies, administered over 30 doses of Narcan to the individuals and saved their lives. Sergeant Webber and Officers Moss, Killough, Iacco, and Sereika were honored.

Mayor Reynolds asked Director Dordea to share the income tax figures from 2023. Director Dordea stated income tax receipts increased 11.2% in 2023 over 2022. Since income tax receipts make up 76% of the general fund revenues, this is important and the second largest increase he has seen in his tenure with the City of Wooster. Mayor Reynolds added the receipts were where Director Dordea had predicted they would be.

Mayor Reynolds asked Director Montgomery to share information about the cold weather shelter and a fiber optic installation project that is underway. Director Montgomery said the cold weather shelter, run by the homelessness task force, had been open for several days and would remain open while the weather was at a "feels like" temperature of 32 degrees or lower. He added the shelter opens at 5:00 pm and the City has set aside funds to help with operating costs.

Director Montgomery also shared an update on the Omni Fiber project, stating the construction teams struck a couple of waterlines last week and the lines were repaired within 24 hours. The City Engineering Division stopped the project until those issues were remedied. Director Montgomery said the project is approximately 60% complete. In addition to Omni Fiber, BrightSpeed and MCTV are also working on communications projects in the city. He asked council members to direct callers to John Rice, City Engineer, because he will have the most recent information to share with residents.

Mayor Reynolds noted the City's Planning and Zoning Manager, Vince Marion, had recently conducted an orientation meeting for the boards and commission under his purview. The Mayor noted there is a fair amount of turnover on the volunteer boards and he believed the session was well-received and helpful to the new members. Mayor Reynolds shared he had met with President Sanders and Director Montgomery to discuss agenda timing and communication between City Administration and City Council. He also said he attended an

open house at the College of Wooster to meet the new president of the college, as well as attended a Wayne Economic Development Council breakfast meeting. Mayor Reynolds said he had met with Wooster City Schools Superintendent, Gabe Tudor, and stated he and Mr. Tudor share many of the same goals for the community. Mayor Reynolds has also met with Kayla Atchinson, a representative of Congressman Max Miller's office, and they discussed grant opportunities. Mayor Reynolds advised he plans to revive the tri-cities meetings with Orrville and Rittman, which had fallen off after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Mayor Reynolds briefly went over the agenda for the evening.

#### **IV. PETITIONS/COMMUNICATIONS FROM PUBLIC**

Mr. James Fox, 1476 Gasche Street: Mr. Fox is the President and CEO of Community Action Wayne/Medina and he addressed council in support of Ordinance 2024-03. Mr. Fox explained the house would be used for workforce housing in an effort to help families become more independent.

Ms. Linda Houston, 1823 Burbank Road. Ms. Houston spoke in opposition to Resolution 2023-86, a moratorium on recreational marijuana permits.

#### **V. COMMITTEE REPORTS; PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

#### **VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Third Reading – RESOLUTION 2023-86 A RESOLUTION IMPOSING A MORATORIUM ON THE GRANTING OR PROCESSING OF PERMITS FOR ANY BUILDING, STRUCTURE, USE OR CHANGE OF USE THAT WOULD ENABLE CULTIVATION, PROCESSING, OR RETAIL SALE OF MARIJUANA WITHIN THE CITY OF WOOSTER, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Knapic)

Ms. Knapic said she is not concerned about what residents do in the privacy of their homes, but she is concerned about people smoking in public. She believes the legislation gives the City some time while the state is working on the final version of the law.

Mr. Abernathy asked if there were any legal ramifications if the council passed the legislation. Director Scavelli said no, there are not. The City does not know what the state legislature is going to put into place and it is best to hold off until we know what the final version of the state law will be.

Ms. Warden asked if the Planning and Zoning Division is going to start gathering ideas so the City is ready when the time comes. Director Montgomery said yes, they are working on it.

Mr. Huszai said his employer has been receiving inquiries from outside of the community about available real estate, so it would be wise to make sure the City is prepared. He asked Chief Fisher how policing would be affected with legalized recreational marijuana. Chief Fisher replied there will be issues from an enforcement standpoint and one of the known issues is with testing because labs are not able to test for marijuana in less than a bulk amount.

Ms. Knapic moved, seconded by Ms. Warden, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 6-1 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - no, and Warden – yes)

#### **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

1. First Reading – RESOLUTION NO. 2024-04 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF

ADMINISTRATION TO ADVERTISE ACCORDING TO LAW AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE LOWEST AND BEST BIDDER FOR THE RESURFACING OF VARIOUS ROADS WITHIN THE CITY OF WOOSTER AND PROVIDING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Warden)

Ms. Warden said this legislation is for paving several roads, including Robin Hood Drive, Friar Tuck Circle, Little John Lane, Fairview Circle, Allandale Drive, and portions of Sherwood Drive, W. Henry Street, and Timken Road.

Mr. Abernathy asked when the work is planned to begin, and Ms. Warden said it will start in the summer. Mr. Abernathy expressed concern about the number of planned projects and how it would affect residents. Mr. Rice said there will be a lot of construction going on but they try to coordinate as much as possible with the contractors of the various projects. Director Montgomery added most of the streets in this project are in an allotment and are not major streets, so local residents will be affected but it should not affect major traffic flows.

Ms. Warden moved, seconded by Mr. Huszai, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

2. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-05 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE LOWEST AND BEST BIDDER FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE WATERLINE ON BILLIAR STREET AND BILLIAR ALLEY AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Malta)

Mr. Malta explained that the waterline on Billiar Street and Billiar Alley are in need of repair and this project would repace the waterlines and 26 water services.

Mr. Malta moved, seconded by Mr. Huszai, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

3. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-06 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION TO ENTER INTO A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH JONES AND HENRY FOR ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION SERVICES AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Malta)

Mr. Malta said the project is anticipated to last 12-18 months and Jones and Henry will provide construction administration, shop drawing review, construction inspections, and a final walkthrough for the project. Ms. Knapic asked if this is the last contract for this firm. Mr. Rice replied it is for the headworks and VLRs 1 and 2. She asked how much the City has paid Jones and Henry for the project so far. Director Montgomery said he did not have the figures in front of him, but council had approved design contracts, a contract for the study of the plant itself, and UV disinfection. Ms. Knapic said she would like to make sure the City is keeping track of how much is spent in total.

Mr. Huszai asked if a committee meeting could be called in the next few months so new council members could get up to speed on the projects. Director Montgomery said he agreed that would be helpful to new members.

Ms. Warden asked about the total estimate for all of the planned wastewater treatment projects. Director Montgomery said the total for all of the projects is more than \$12 million.

Mr. Malta moved, seconded by Mr. Abernathy, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

4. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-07 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION TO ADVERTISE ACCORDING TO LAW AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE LOWEST AND BEST BIDDER FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF VARIOUS ROADS WITHIN THE CITY OF WOOSTER AND PROVIDING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Warden)

Ms. Warden explained this project is for the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Oak Hill and Milltown Roads. She said it will not affect entrance to the Hunt Club development, includes new pavement, curbs, gutters, sidewalk, multi-use path, storm sewer, and extension of the sanitary sewer.

Mr. Abernathy asked about the location of the roundabout and the timeline for construction. Mr. Rice replied it would be centered southwest of the current intersection, and Ms. Warden said construction is planned to begin at the end of the current school year, last through the summer, and wrap up after the next school year begins. Mr. Abernathy expressed his concerns about the disruption this project will create for residents and the schools.

Ms. Warden moved, seconded by Mr. Myers, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

5. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-08 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE LOWEST AND BEST BIDDER FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE WATERLINE ON PALMER STREET, NORTH OF BOWMAN, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Malta)

Mr. Malta said Palmer Street will be paved this summer, so the City would like to replace the waterline prior to the paving project. Ms. Warden asked which section of Palmer would be affected and Mr. Rice said it is the section north of Bowman Street.

Mr. Malta moved, seconded by Ms. Knapic, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

6. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-09 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION TO ADVERTISE ACCORDING TO LAW AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE LOWEST AND BEST BIDDER FOR THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF A TRAFFIC SIGNAL AND RELATED EQUIPMENT AT STATE ROUTE 585 AND STATE ROUTE 3 AND 83 NORTHBOUND RAMP, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Warden)

Ms. Warden said this traffic signal has reached the end of its useful life and the project is eligible for a \$55,000 grant from ODOT. She also noted there is a long lead time for materials so the sooner bids are solicited, the sooner the materials can be on order.

Mayor Reynolds noted the cost of a roundabout is a one-time expense. Traffic signals need replaced over time. President Sanders added traffic signals also require additional maintenance costs that roundabouts do not.

Mr. Abernathy pointed out a typographical error in the legislation, which Ms. Hamilton will correct per Ordinance 2022-30.

Ms. Warden moved, seconded by Mr. Malta, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

7. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-10 A RESOLUTION APPROVING A NATURAL GAS AGGREGATION PLAN OF OPERATION AND GOVERNANCE, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Abernathy)

Mr. Abernathy noted the residents voted to approve aggregation for utilities and asked Director Montgomery to explain the process. Director Montgomery said the governance plan is part of the process to put the aggregation plans into place. Essentially, the governance plan permits the City to solicit prices for natural gas and electric providers. Mayor Reynolds asked if the new council members had received the information about the process, and Director Montgomery said he would send it to them.

Mr. Abernathy asked how the opt-in/opt-out process will work, whether it would be fairly seamless or require more work on the part of citizens. Director Montgomery replied it would work mostly seamlessly, unless someone already entered into a contract with a specific provider. Those who are already in a contract will not be automatically enrolled. He said the City will try to get the word out to inform residents of their options.

Ms. Warden asked when residents could expect aggregated rates to be available. Director Montgomery said probably springtime. Provided council approves the governance plans, those plans will be sent to PUCO to be certified, then RFPs would be solicited, the RFPs will be reviewed, and one will be selected. He also said the communications will have the City of Wooster, Palmer Energy, and OML on them, so if residents receive anything else, it's not from the City program.

Mr. Abernathy moved, seconded by Ms. Knapic, to suspend the rules and place on third and final reading. Upon roll call, motion to suspend the rules passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

Mr. Abernathy moved, seconded by Ms. Knapic, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

8. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-11 A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN ELECTRIC POWER AGGREGATION PLAN OF OPERATION AND GOVERNANCE, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Abernathy)

Mr. Abernathy asked if there were any differences between the natural gas versus the electric timelines. Director Montgomery said the electric aggregation process would start right away and the natural gas would begin during the summer.

Mr. Abernathy moved, seconded by Mr. Gaffey, to suspend the rules and place on third and final reading. Upon roll call, motion to suspend the rules passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

Mr. Abernathy moved, seconded by Ms. Warden, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)



9. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-12 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION TO PURCHASE THREE FORD EXPLORERS FOR USE AS POLICE CRUISERS AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Gaffey)

Mr. Gaffey noted the legislation states the expenditure is not to exceed the approved budget because there was not sufficient time to obtain estimates on the cost of the vehicles. He said the Police Department needs to replace three cruisers and due to upcoming changes on new vehicles, there is an opportunity to outfit them with new interior equipment. Mr. Gaffey added if there is enough money left in the budget, then the legislation also gives permission to replace the SWAT van.

Mr. Gaffey moved, seconded by Mr. Abernathy, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

10. First Reading - ORDINANCE NO. 2024-03 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION TO ENTER INTO A LEASE OF REAL ESTATE AND PROVIDING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Huszai)

Mr. Huszai explained the ordinance would allow the City to enter into a lease agreement with Community Action Wayne/Medina (CAW/M) for 531 N. Walnut Street. He said the City has no current use for the house and (CAW/M) would take over maintenance and use it for their transitional housing program.

Mr. Sanders asked what kind of notice is required if the City should need to use the property. Director Montgomery said they would start with a two-year lease.

Mr. Huszai moved, seconded by Mr. Abernathy, to suspend the rules and place on third and final reading. Upon roll call, motion to suspend the rules passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

Mr. Huszai moved, seconded by Mr. Myers, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

11. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-13 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION TO PURCHASE A BUCKET TRUCK (Huszai)

Mr. Huszai said the City would like to purchase a bucket truck that can reach traffic sensor cameras that are mounted on top of traffic signals. He said the City would continue to use the bucket truck they have, as well.

Mr. Huszai moved, seconded by Ms. Knapic, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

12. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-14 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION TO PURCHASE TWO PICKUP TRUCKS (Huszai)

Mr. Huszai said two pickup trucks are beyond their useful life and need to be replaced. The two new trucks would be put into daily use throughout the year in maintaining City streets.

Ms. Warden asked if it was known which make of truck would be purchased. Mr. Denning replied they would look at what is offered through the State Purchasing Program and try to find the best price and local vendors.

Mr. Huszai moved, seconded by Mr. Gaffey, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

13. First Reading - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-15 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION TO ADVERTISE ACCORDING TO LAW AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE LOWEST AND BEST BIDDER FOR FUEL SERVICES FOR CITY VEHICLES AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Huszai)

Mr. Huszai said this is a resolution to enter into a contract with Red Rover, who the City works with to fuel its fleet of vehicles. Mr. Denning explained Red Rover was the only entity in town that could provide the fuel services the City needs, which has several locations and can accommodate the safety services vehicles, too. Ms. Knapic asked about the pricing and how it was calculated using the OPIS Akron/Canton Daily Average. Mr. Denning said the gas price, based on that average plus \$0.17 per gallon works out to be \$0.03-\$0.04 per gallon cheaper than the public price.

Mr. Huszai moved, seconded by Mr. Myers, to adopt. Upon roll call, motion to adopt passed 7-0 (Abernathy - yes, Gaffey – yes, Huszai – yes, Knapic – yes, Malta-yes, Myers - yes, and Warden – yes)

#### VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

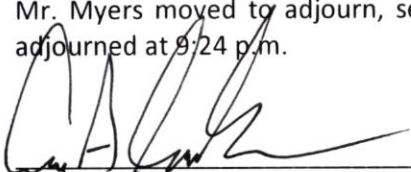
Mr. Abernathy expressed concern for the lack of workforce housing in Wooster, and wants to work to find solutions to relieve the situation.

Ms. Knapic, Ms. Warden, and Mr. Malta thanked the police officers for their hard work to save lives. Mr. Myers also thanked Chief Fisher for allowing council members to be part of the officers' public recognition.

Mr. Malta advised he would be out-of-town for work and miss the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Myers moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Gaffey. Upon voice vote, the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Craig Sanders  
President of Council

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Amy Hamilton  
Clerk of Council