

WOOSTER CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
4/15/2024

I. ROLL CALL & ORDERING OF AGENDA

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

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

City Managers present: Police Chief Matt Fisher, Economic Development Coordinator Jonathan Millea, and City Engineer John Rice.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Abernathy moved to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2024 regular meeting, seconded by Mr. Gaffey. Upon voice vote, the minutes were approved.

III. COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR/ADMINISTRATION

Mayor Reynolds recapped several meetings and events that had taken place since the last council meeting, including meetings with the Emblem Club, the Salvation Army, and O-Huddle, as well as the Solar Eclipse. The Mayor said Ohio State Senator Al Landis will be coming to Wooster on April 17th for a tour of the Lyric Theater and reported that the City Administration will also attend the annual WEDC meeting on April 18th. Mayor Reynolds said the City has plans to honor the Seaman Corporation's 75th anniversary in a ceremony downtown and will dedicate a plaque at that time. He also briefly previewed the night's legislation.

Mayor Reynolds informed council members about an issue that arose during a recent public board meeting. An attendee got upset because he disagreed with a decision made by the board and later denounced them on social media. Mayor Reynolds said it is fine to disagree with decisions made, but the attendee went too far when he followed board members to their cars to continue voicing his anger. Mayor Reynolds reiterated the board members are volunteers giving of their time to serve on boards and commissions and that while it is fine to express an opinion, it is not OK to harass members outside of the meeting setting.

Mayor Reynolds also addressed the road conditions in the area of the Oak Hill and Milltown Roads roundabout construction. He said the contractor did not provide a drivable surface for residents and would be held liable for its contractual failings. Mayor Reynolds said the City did not respond quickly enough to require the contractor to fix the roadway. Mayor Reynolds apologized to those that were affected and promised it would not happen again.

IV. PETITIONS/COMMUNICATIONS FROM PUBLIC

Chuck Malta, 2113 Normandy Drive, spoke in support of the Christmas Run Pool project and urged Council and the City to have a transportation plan to Freedlander Pool for kids who would typically be able to walk to Christmas Run.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS; PUBLIC HEARINGS

Finance Committee Report – Mr. Abernathy said Director Dordea presented the first quarter financial report during the committee meeting.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Third Reading - ORDINANCE NO. 2024-09 AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF BONDS IN THE MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$4,030,000 FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING COSTS OF IMPROVING AND EXPANDING THE CITY'S SANITARY SEWERAGE SYSTEM BY CONSTRUCTING AND RECONSTRUCTING SANITARY SEWERS, FORCE MAINS AND LIFT STATIONS, TOGETHER WITH ALL NECESSARY APPURTENANCES THERETO, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Abernathy)

Mr. Abernathy said since this and the next four ordinances are all regarding bond issues, he would ask questions now that pertain to all five. He asked how long it takes to take the bonds to market and sell them. Director Dordea replied he could have them ready for an online auction by May 21st. Mr. Abernathy asked if 3.5% was still a reasonable guess as to the interest rate. Director Dordea said yes, it was. Mr. Abernathy asked what the term lengths were for each of the bonds. Director Dordea said it would be 25-year terms on the bonds for the ones related to the TIF (the sewer system and the Oak Hill, Milltown, and Commerce Parkway improvements), 15 years for Melrose Drive and Christmas Run Pool, and 20 years for the bonds related to the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Abernathy asked the City Administration to assure taxpayers that tax rates would not increase as a result of issuing these bonds. Director Dordea said they did not factor in any tax increases. Director Montgomery added the 2024 budget shows how the debt service would affect the budget if these bonds were issued.

Mr. Abernathy moved, seconded by Mr. Myers, to adopt. Upon roll call vote, the motion was approved. (Abernathy – yes, Gaffey – yes, Malta – yes, Myers – yes, and Warden – yes)

2. Third Reading - ORDINANCE NO. 2024-10 AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF BONDS IN THE MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$565,000 TO PAY THE PROPERTY OWNERS' PORTION, IN ANTICIPATION OF THE COLLECTION OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS HERETOFORE LEVIED, OF THE COSTS OF IMPROVING MELROSE DRIVE BETWEEN CERTAIN TERMINI BY GRADING, DRAINING, WIDENING, PAVING, RESURFACING, CONSTRUCTING CURBS, GUTTERS, A MULTI-USE PATH, SIDEWALKS AND DRIVEWAY APPROACHES, INSTALLING STORM SEWERS, CATCH BASINS, MANHOLES, WATER MAINS, FIRE HYDRANTS, AND TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNS, AND ACQUIRING ANY REAL ESTATE AND INTERESTS THEREIN REQUIRED THEREBY, ALL TOGETHER WITH THE NECESSARY APPURTENANCES THERETO, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Abernathy)

Mr. Abernathy reiterated these bonds would be issued with a 15-year term and paid for by the property owners in the Melrose Drive area.

Mr. Abernathy moved, seconded by Mr. Malta, to adopt. Upon roll call vote, the motion was approved. (Abernathy – yes, Gaffey – yes, Malta – yes, Myers – yes, and Warden – yes)

3. Third Reading - ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11 AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF BONDS IN THE MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$5,500,000 FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING COSTS OF CONSTRUCTING, FURNISHING, EQUIPPING AND OTHERWISE IMPROVING A MUNICIPAL SWIMMING POOL AND RELATED RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND IMPROVING THE SITE THEREOF, AND TOGETHER WITH NECESSARY AND INCIDENTAL APPURTENANCES THERETO, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Abernathy)

Mr. Abernathy said he did not realize at first how much the public supported the pool and that some members of the public believed he was against reconstructing the pool. He said was surprised to be approached in public about it. Mr. Myers expressed his support of Christmas Run Pool and asked if the City could also look at the cost of replacing the pool house. Director Montgomery said that is something the designers are looking at and will provide information on options for the pool house. Mr. Myers added that he had the impression Mr. Abernathy was concerned about the cost and issuing debt but not against the project itself.

Mr. Abernathy moved, seconded by Mr. Myers, to adopt. Upon roll call vote, the motion was approved. (Abernathy – yes, Gaffey – yes, Malta – yes, Myers – yes, and Warden – yes)

4. Third Reading - ORDINANCE NO. 2024-12 AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF BONDS IN THE MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$4,655,000 FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING COSTS OF IMPROVING STREETS AND ROADS IN THE CITY INCLUDING OAK HILL ROAD, MILLTOWN ROAD AND COMMERCE PARKWAY BY PURCHASING A RIGHT OF WAY, CONSTRUCTING, RECONSTRUCTING, WIDENING, GRADING, DRAINING, PAVING, CREATING A ROUNDABOUT AND OTHERWISE IMPROVING, TOGETHER WITH ALL NECESSARY RELATED IMPROVEMENTS AND APPURTENANCES THERETO, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Abernathy)

Mr. Abernathy explained these bonds would pay for the roundabout and would be repaid with TIF funds.

Mr. Abernathy moved, seconded by Ms. Warden, to adopt. Upon roll call vote, the motion was approved. (Abernathy – yes, Gaffey – yes, Malta – yes, Myers – yes, and Warden – yes)

5. Third Reading - ORDINANCE NO. 2024-13 AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF BONDS IN THE MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$3,100,000 FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING COSTS OF IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING THE CITY’S SANITARY SEWERAGE SYSTEM PLANT INCLUDING UPGRADES TO THE BIOSOLIDS, BIOGAS AND HEADWORKS SYSTEMS, TOGETHER WITH ALL NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS AND APPURTENANCES THERETO, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Abernathy)

Mr. Abernathy asked City Administration if these bonds were to fund the project for the part of the plant that is not currently operational.

Mr. Abernathy moved, seconded by Mr. Gaffey, to adopt. Upon roll call vote, the motion was approved. (Abernathy – yes, Gaffey – yes, Malta – yes, Myers – yes, and Warden – yes)

6. Second Reading – ORDINANCE NO. 2024-08 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 160, BIDDING PROCEDURES AND CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS, OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WOOSTER, OHIO, BY INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF THE LIMIT FOR COMPETITIVE BIDDING (Warden)

Ms. Warden said the ordinance is a request from the City to increase the competitive bidding threshold from \$50,000 to \$75,000. She also noted Director Scavelli had prepared an amended ordinance for members to review that took into consideration the discussion from the previous meeting about a three-tiered process. Mr. Abernathy asked if he was correct to say the current situation was \$50,000 to go to bid and would go to \$75,000, which would mean instead of going through an advertising and bidding process, contractors would be asked for quotes if Director Montgomery said it takes about 60 manhours to prepare the projects for bid, some contractors do not want to go through the process of obtaining a bid bond and all of the work involved in submitting it, so it deters some from sending in a bid. He also said it adds 10-15% to the cost of the project.

7. Second Reading – ORDINANCE NO. 2024-14 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 539.04 LIQUOR PROHIBITED WITHOUT A PERMIT OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WOOSTER, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Warden)

Ms. Warden said this legislation would allow liquor permits issued for events at the Freedlander Chalet to extend to the new patio area. She also noted that Ashley Hershberger, Recreation Manager, said the patio is going to be an enclosed space with signage.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. First Reading – ORDINANCE NO. 2024-15 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING PART ELEVEN, ZONING, OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WOOSTER, OHIO, TO RE-ZONE LAND TO C-3 (GENERAL COMMERCIAL) FOR PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF EAST SMITHVILLE-WESTERN AND CLEVELAND ROADS (Warden)

Ms. Warden described the location of the parcel, noting it is next to the existing Dairy Queen. She explained the Campbell Oil Company purchased the property and plans to build a new Dairy Queen on the site with improved access that should benefit the residents and traffic flow in the area. Mayor Reynolds noted a public hearing is required before council can vote on the legislation and, due to timing of notifying the local property owners, the public hearing is scheduled for the May 6th council meeting.

2. First Reading - RESOLUTION 2024-30 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ODOT COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM, AND ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT (Warden)

Ms. Warden said the City would benefit by participating in the ODOT program to get a lower price for road salt. She said Public Properties Maintenance Division plans to purchase about 2,000 tons of salt for the 2024-25 winter. Ms. Warden noted that even though ODOT's deadline for submitting a resolution is May 3rd, the City had made arrangements to submit all other documentation by the deadline with a copy of the resolution to follow as soon as it was passed.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

The following members of the public spoke on the topic of election concerns:

Dorene Miller: 3590 Snyder Drive

Mary Wood: 380 Meadow Lane

Bonnie Kaufman: 3024 S. Jefferson Road/1846 Cher Court (residential address)

Susan Sonnet: 1468 Ramblewood Drive

Mary Stoll: 514 W. Hutton Road/131 N Market Street (business address)

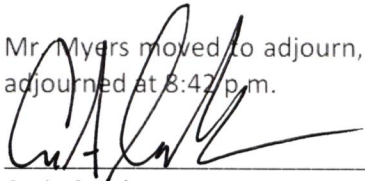
Thomas Wood: 380 Meadow Lane

The following member spoke on the topic of construction concerns for the Oak Hill/Milltown roundabout:

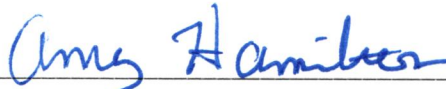
Katherine Ritchie: 1285 Jesse Owens Drive

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Myers moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Abernathy. Upon voice vote, the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.



Craig Sanders
President of Council



Amy Hamilton
Clerk of Council