

**Monroe Council Minutes  
Regular Meeting of Council  
May 12, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.**

**This meeting was held electronically (remotely) pursuant to  
Ohio Revised Code Section 121.221**

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***Pledge of Allegiance***

Mayor Frentzel opened the regular meeting of Council with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:30 p.m.

***Roll Call***

Council members present: Tom Callahan, Jason Frentzel, Keith Funk, Anna Hale, Todd Hickman, Christina McElfresh, and Robert E. Routson

***Approval of the Minutes***

Mr. Funk moved to approve the Council minutes of April 28, 2020; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

***Visitors***

None.

***Committee Reports***

None.

***Old Business***

**Resolution No. 28-2020.** A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding by and between the City of Monroe and West Chester Township to provide for a combined Crisis Response Unit for tactical operations during high risk situations. (Second Reading)

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the second reading of Resolution No. 28-2020 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 28-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Resolution No. 28-2020; seconded by Mr. Callahan. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

*New Business*

**Emergency Resolution No. 29-2020.** A Resolution approving a Then-and-Now Certificate in the amount of \$3,785.00 to Drypatrol, LLC and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 29-2020 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Callahan. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Resolution No. 29-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 29-2020; seconded by Mr. Callahan. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

**Emergency Resolution No. 30-2020.** A Resolution accepting the lowest and/or best bid submitted for the purchase of a Vactor-jet Truck and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock reported that bids were sought for a used piece as a new one would cost approximately \$400,000. This is a combined unit and we have two separate units that we are seeking approval to sell.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 30-2020 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council of Council read Emergency Resolution No. 30-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 30-2020; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: five ayes; two nays (Callahan and Hickman). Motion carried.

**Emergency Resolution No. 31-2020.** A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement by and between the City of Monroe and the U C Economics Center to provide tax forecasting and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock explained that U C Economics Center completed the City's housing study and we asked them to provide a proposal to analyze our income tax data and economic mix to provide a revenue forecast for the next six years. They use various models and techniques that we do not typically use when we are doing our own forecasting. Because of the nature of what is happening with the economy and the uncertainty we asked them to assist us in this as we move forward in our tax budgeting. Our tax budgeting focuses on revenues and it will give us a good model moving forward. The amount of variability we are seeing in the economy we thought it would be good to get an outside perspective and some further expertise to assist us in that forecast.

Mr. Routson referenced the housing study they completed for the City pointing out they left out one of our closest neighbors in relationship to housing. Liberty Township was left out and some of the numbers they gave us were not what Butler County showed and Mr. Routson was not sure he was comfortable using this group. That housing study left out a lot of information.

Mr. Brock advised that the plan is to use all of the data in the region to give us the best forecast as possible.

Mrs. Hale asked what the cost is of the study. Mr. Brock replied it was \$16,250.

Mr. Hickman asked if it was just a one-time fee and Mr. Brock confirmed it was just a one-time cost for a six-year projection. Mr. Hickman did not recall using anyone before for this and asked who did it before. Mr. Brock stated that it has always been performed internally. With the uncertainty moving forward, a study by economist will benefit the City.

Mrs. Hale asked how Council would know if what is received from this study is going to be correct or close to correct with the uncertainty. Mr. Brock explained they can look at our business mix that has changed quite significantly over the last few years and they have more resources to put towards this type of work. They are doing similar work for the City of Cincinnati.

Mr. Routson would expect them to put more effort into this process.

Mr. Frentzel asked if there would be any personal information provided or would it just be numbers. Mr. Brock stated there would be no personal information it would just be the type of revenue coming in.

Mrs. McElfresh asked if this information would have helped given the past challenges the City has gone through. Mr. Brock indicated that it would not have helped with the fiscal emergency; however, it would have been helpful during the recession. Mrs. McElfresh wants to be respectful with the funds that the City has right now as that is going to be challenging moving forward. We have this information already and we would be paying someone \$16,000 for them to give us their best guess.

Mr. Routson stated that when the City went into fiscal emergency that was caused by over spending because of certain items City Council wanted at that time.

Mr. Funk added that the City uses consultants on other items that cost less than \$16,000. He felt it was very forward thinking and makes sense to get an economist's view on how we are going to come out of this and how we budget.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring Emergency Resolution No. 31-2020 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Resolution No. 31-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 31-2020; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: three ayes; four nays (Callahan, Hale, Hickman, McElfresh). Motion failed.

**Resolution No. 32-2020.** A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an amended agreement by and between the City of Monroe and the Monroe Local School District to provide for the waiver of payments for School Resource Officers during periods of time when the services are not utilized.

Mr. Brock reported that the school approached the Chief of Police asking about being reimbursed for their last quarter as they did not receive any services from the School Resource Officers. The amendment would allow for that.

Mr. Funk asked if we have communicated with the school district to see what type of cuts they are going to need to make. Mr. Brock speaks with the Superintendent often and they recently have had additional cuts from the State.

Chief Buchanan explained that the school makes four quarterly payments and they are requesting the last quarter when the schools were ordered closed and normally they were paying all four quarters.

Mr. Hickman asked about the term of the agreement and Chief Buchanan advised that it renews automatically. Mr. Hickman asked if there was a hiring freeze on police officers. Mr. Brock noted there was to a certain number. Mr. Hickman was of the opinion there should be a hiring freeze for all departments. Mr. Brock noted he instituted a hiring freeze earlier this month for all departments.

Mr. Hickman did not recall Council voting on that. Mr. Brock advised that he did it administratively and included in a report to Council. Mr. Hickman asked if Council should adopt legislation to make sure the hiring freeze actually happens. Mr. Funk commented that the Council appoints Mr. Brock and he manages the City and trusts his judgment. Mr. Hickman pointed out that Council manages the money. Mr. Routson noted that by October the City may be in good shape and isn't sure that the City needs a hiring freeze.

Mayor Frentzel asked if this is something that Council votes on or accomplished administratively by Mr. Brock. Mr. Hickman advised that Council has voted for this in the past.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Resolution No. 32-2020 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 32-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Resolution No. 32-2020; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

**Resolution No. 33-2020.** A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a lease agreement by and between the City of Monroe and VirTra for a V-300 Training System for the Department of Police.

Mr. Brock explained this is a lease agreement for a training system in the new police facility. In looking at the cost between this system and a firing range, a firing range costs approximately \$700,000. The VirTra system allows for non-live fire types of training. It will help bring the training in-house and the funding will come from the proceeds coming from the bond. Mrs. McElfresh asked what we currently spend on outsourcing. Chief Buchanan replied that it breaks down every weapon system that the officers carry, both lethal and non-lethal. This system also brings in a decision making matrix. Between the overtime and the amount that is spent for classes, it is probably between \$75,000 to \$100,000 annually, which is a low estimate. This brings as much training in-house as possible to lower those training costs.

Mr. Routson asked if this service could be offered to other departments. Chief Buchanan advised that it could and that is one of the big components when we started to design it. This facility does allow host training and usually the other officers have to pay to go through the training. Mr. Hickman asked where they go now and Chief Buchanan indicated that many years ago there was a system and there is not one around the area like this now. Chief Buchanan, in response to Mr. Hickman's question, explained that officers would still have to train with the live firearms. This system allows them to work on the less lethal weapons. They are put in decision making actions. While they are working they can get this training as opposed to going offsite for the training.

Mr. Hickman asked if next year Council will see legislation to add a firing range at the new location. Chief Buchanan advised he has no plans for that at this moment; however, he cannot predict if the firing ranges in the area will be shut down and if there will be a need for one due to that.

Mayor Frentzel questioned the benefit of having this installed during construction or can it be revisited once there is a better understanding of the City's finances. Mr. Brock stated that the room has already been designed for this system and waiting does not provide a financial advantage.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Resolution No. 33-2020 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 33-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Resolution No. 33-2020; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

**Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-15.** An Ordinance authorizing the sale of certain personal property no longer needed for municipal purposes and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock explained this will allow for the sale of the Vactor unit and the jetter. Mr. Hickman asked when the Vactor truck will be here and where it was coming from. Mr. Brock replied that it is coming from Louisville, Kentucky and should be here in a couple of weeks.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-15 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-15 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-15; seconded by Mr. Routson. Roll call vote: four ayes; three nays. Motion Carried. (adopted, but not as an emergency)

**Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-16.** An Ordinance amending and supplementing Chapter 1065 of the Codified Ordinances to eliminate reference to the James Monroe Community Room, allow for full refunds for canceled reservations, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock stated this ordinance and the next ordinance relate to the deposits on the community rooms and the park shelter deposits.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-16 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-16 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-16; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

**Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-17.** An Ordinance supplementing Section 286.13 of the Codified Ordinances to allow for full refunds for cancelled reservations in exigent circumstances and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-17 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-17 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-17; seconded by Mr. Routson. Roll call: seven ayes. Motion carried.

**Consideration of Motion** authorizing the expenditure of \$175,700 to CXT Concrete Buildings for the purchase of a pre-constructed building for restroom facilities at Monroe Crossings Park.

Mr. Brock reported this is the third attempt to get a structure in the rear of Monroe Crossings Park. Both times bids were sought the bids came in higher than the estimate. Public Works staff

was able to identify a precast structure that was built for another use that wasn't sold and willing to sell to the City under cost. This will come in three parts and erected on a concrete pad constructed by the Public Works staff.

Mr. Funk asked if there are plans for security or surveillance since it is so far from the road. Mr. Brock advised it is right behind the apartment complex, so it is well lit. We are looking at some cellular service cameras as there is no wireless service in that location.

Referring to the prints, Mayor Frentzel asked about the doors on the front and back of the building. Mr. Brock replied that the door on the back is used for storage of equipment. Soccer is using the storage in the front building. We are receiving \$175,000 in grant funding for this.

Mr. Funk moved to authorize the expenditure of \$175,700 to CXT Concrete Buildings for the purchase of a pre-constructed building for restroom facilities at Monroe Crossings Park; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

### ***Administrative Reports***

Mr. Brock advised that on an upcoming agenda will be an amended appropriation ordinance to reduce the overall expenditures by five percent.

Mr. Brock brought up the City-wide Garage Sale scheduled for the first weekend in June. Mayor Frentzel agreed to not discourage people to have garage sales; however, they will not be able to come in the City Building to sign up.

Mr. Routson was of the opinion that we should proceed with having this as people do not need to come to the City Building. They can call in or sign up online. We can still put a map together and put it on our website. Having this is a good start in opening up Monroe. Mr. Funk agreed as it is an innovative approach. We could also postpone it to August 1 if needed so people feel more comfortable going out in public.

Mayor Frentzel noted that the Light Up the Sky Event was cancelled by the Monroe Lions Club, but the fireworks for the Fourth of July has not been ruled out. Mr. Hickman and Mr. Routson understood that the fireworks were cancelled.

Mrs. McElfresh asked Mrs. Wasson and Mr. Brock if they have requested the City's refund back for the fireworks. Mrs. Wasson advised that during her conversation with Rozzi's Famous Fireworks they agreed to hold our deposit until next year. They did ask if we could still hold the fireworks yet this year, but they are very willing to work with the City.

Mr. Routson questioned if the City's budget allowed for these fireworks and we should wait to see with the economy and the virus. Let's see what the people of Monroe want to see.

Mr. Funk stated that the response he has heard from the residents is they would still like to see the fireworks. Everyone would like to see a bit of normalcy. Perhaps we light them off at the Monroe Bicentennial Commons Park and everyone can see them from their cars.

Mayor Frentzel suggested keeping an open mind on the fireworks until the beginning of June. There were no objections from Council.

Mayor Frentzel asked Mr. Brock if people could forward their information on the garage sale to an email. Mr. Brock advised if people wanted to do that we could certainly put that list out. We can adjust our plans if that is something that Council would like to do.

Mrs. McElfresh had no objection to this and keep them as scheduled.

Mayor Frentzel asked Mr. Brock to put information together and get this out on social media and our website.

Mr. Hickman noted that it might be the only community garage sale and you will have a lot of people coming from all over.

Mr. Routson moved to continue to have the community garage sale as scheduled; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Mr. Brock presented a proposed budget response for the years 2020 and 2021 due to the recent pandemic and the uncertainty of the economy in the future.

## **2020**

- Defer or reallocate capital expenditure
- Instituted a hiring/wage freeze
- Reduced the department budgets by 5%

## **2021**

- Track our revenues and review our fund balance policy.
- In July he would like to begin monthly so that Council can define where those cuts will be and what the level of services will be.

## **Expenditures in 2020**

- We want to limit spending to essential purchases only
- Temporarily modify our approval limits for all purchases, including p-card limits. We have started to pull p-cards from staff to control that spending.
- All travel and training must be pre-approved
- We have a hiring freeze with the exception of essential personnel.

## **Expenditures in 2021**

### ***City Manager's office and human resources***

10% reduction could result in

- Hiring freeze/unfilled vacancies, causing a reduction in work productivity due to spreading increased work loads to existing employees
- Wage freeze causes greater stress on employees through reduction in standard of living
- We had a good program for training and development of staff and reducing that will slow organizational development goals and improvement to critical systems.
- Possibility of reduction in legal counsel support of union negotiations/grievance responses and policy updates

20% reduction could result in

- Increased benefit cost to employees – higher health insurance costs and elimination of HSA contribution
- Elimination of organizational development and training resources
- Elimination of employee wellness and recognition programs
- Suspend tuition reimbursement programs
- Many initiatives to modernize policies and streamline employee needs suspended
- Elimination of economic development activities for business attraction

Mr. Routson asked if the higher benefit costs would only apply to non-union employees. Mr. Brock advised that the costs are same for non-union and union.

### ***Development***

10% reduction could result in

- Planning for future development of Main Street, Monroe Bicentennial Commons and other parks, interchange/corridor enhancements, etc. could diminish or halt to focus on permit processing
- Grant management capabilities diminished or halted to focus on permit processing

20% reduction could result in

- Permit processing of building, event, accessory use and new business significantly delayed
- Property maintenance enforcement greatly reduced
- Approval timelines for site plan review extended
- If we lose a staff member that position may not be able to be filled

### ***Finance***

10% reduction could result in

- Eliminating overtime that would prevent complementary services/reduces normal operational hours that we are able to provide citizens

- Elimination of part time staffing that would delay processing times for tax, administrative, development, and utility customers

20% reduction could result in

- Reduction in full time staff causing significant delays in processing of tax, utility, and permit payments and applications
- Delay in implementation of technologies that are meant to streamline these processes

### ***Public Works***

10% reduction could result in

- Reduction in overtime and limited salt purchase will effect snow removal response. Overtime will effect the ability to stage and manage events
- No seasonal labor, elimination of contract cleaning and mowing that would reduce roadside mowing frequency and pavement repair programs
- Elimination of Movie in the Park

20% reduction could result in

- Street resurfacing programs curtailed or eliminated
- Building maintenance deferred
- Elimination of annual landscape upkeep and weed control programs
- Elimination of cemetery mowing contracts putting stress on top of staff reductions effects the ability to cover all maintenance needs
- Fleet replacement program deferred or eliminated

### ***Police***

10% reduction could result in

- Reduction of training to State minimum. No technical, tactical, or situational training
- Elimination of specialized training in investigation, drug interdiction or instruction level coursed. Elimination of outside training of dispatchers effecting the needed switch to advanced medical dispatching techniques
- Reduction in fleet that will require two officers in a car which will reduce service response and patrolling, as well as traffic and narcotic enforcement capabilities
- Suspension of offered community services such as, Safety town, Citizens Police Academy, vehicle lockouts, etc.
- Suspension of the K9 program

20% reduction could result in

- Reduction in staff to 2016 levels that will cause the need for officers to cover dispatch shifts further eroding response and follow up times
- Drug enforcement agent will be recalled to road duty
- Fleet reduction of all unmarked cars and additional cruisers
- Overtime reduction to eliminate coverage of community events, such as Light Up the Sky

## ***Fire***

10% reduction could result in

- Operational overtime reductions causing the occasional brown out of fire protection services at State Route 4 leading to longer response times
- Training reductions will impact skill levels of staff
- Project for repair/replacement of aging buildings and replacement of turnout gear to be deferred
- Elimination of the Community Paramedic Program and reduction of administrative support
- Elimination of public education programs
- Special operations reduction leading to longer response times for special response needs

20% reduction could result in

- Staffing reductions to pre-Safer Grant levels (7 new employees) would cause occasional brown out of the Fire and EMS response from State Route 4 causing delays in response times and availability of service's
- No in house special response

## ***Capital Improvements***

- Elimination of General Fund support
- Large capital improvements may need bonded if absolutely needed
- Prioritization
- Deferral

## ***Expenditures***

We have reserve funds for making adjustment to buildings to ensure safety for staff and public. We will have to make some expenditures here. We are looking at sneeze barriers, redesigning the building to allow the public back in and make sure they are safe and channelized. Making sure there is a distance of six feet. Windows may need retrofitted to open to allow fresh air in the building. There is going to be a cost for the increased cleaning and disinfection, the PPE that is required, and cell phones as we are alternating staff in and out to allow them to communicate with our citizens.

A re-entry plan will be developed to address these situations.

On the revenue side there are not many options. There is an option to increase the motor vehicle license tax which would bring in approximately \$155,000 for Public Works. This would double the amount that we have now. We also want to review all of the fees that are charged for revenue enhancements.

Mr. Brock stated that our next step is the tax budget to look at the revenue side. We need to have that to the counties by July. We will continue to update all of this as the economy changes.

Mrs. McElfresh stated that the presentation was pretty sobering and she hopes that anything we can do today we can prevent some of those items from occurring. She doesn't want to see anyone impacted with their health care and their jobs.

Mrs. McElfresh asked what is planned for Memorial Day. Mr. Brock put together a speech for the Mayor's consideration and a video with the veterans' names scrolling.

Mr. Funk asked if we could have the event without the spectators. Mr. Brock was not sure if we have cameras to do a live feed, but it could be recorded.

### ***Adjournment***

Mr. Funk moved to adjourn the regular meeting of Council; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The regular meeting of Council adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela S. Wasson, MMC  
Clerk of Council