

**Monroe Council Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting of Council**  
**September 8, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.**  
**This meeting was held electronically (remotely) pursuant to**  
**Ohio Revised Code Section 121.221**

***Pledge of Allegiance***

Mayor Frentzel opened the regular meeting of Council at 6:36 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

***Roll Call***

Council members present: Jason Frentzel, Keith Funk, Anna Hale, Christina McElfresh, and Robert Routson

Mr. Funk moved to excuse Mr. Callahan and Mr. Hickman; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

***Approval of the Minutes***

Mr. Funk moved to approve the Council Minutes of August 25, 2020; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

***Visitors***

The Clerk of Council reported that 28 individual emails were received containing the same statement. Mrs. Wasson asked Council if they objected to having the statement read once and then read the individual names.

Mr. Routson moved to just read the names of the same email and if there is something different we read that; seconded by Mr. Funk. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read into the record the statement contained in 28 individual emails “I am one percent.” The individual emails were sent by: Jill Alsip, Lynette Musgrave, Alexis Wombold, Amy Manley, Maria Fezell, Brian Fezell, Ryan Wombold, Barbi Koss, Alicia Neely, Lauren Cripe, Kristen and Jonathan Carlson, Julie and Eric Thomas, Abby Hughes, Shawnda Crase, Angela Reisert, Ahdlai Ratliff, Gabe Maxwell, Thom Maxwell, Carrie Goodrich, Jay Buchheim, Mandy Johnson, Bow Freeman, Hannah Parker, Jeff Brown, Kara Brown, Ben Wagner, Miranda Wyrick, Katie Wagner, and Danielle Johnson.

The Clerk of Council read the following emails that were requested to be read into the record:

“Dear Mr. Callahan-  
I am one percent.

You are an embarrassment to this city.  
Sincerely-  
Shannon Friend”

“Dear Mr. Callahan,

It is my belief that everyone is created equal in this world and nothing will ever change that. Everybody should be loved. Any mean remark that is against a different culture is a bad idea. It will hurt their feelings and can embarrass them.

It is not too late to make a difference though. If you apologize to Monroe I bet it would make them feel a lot better. Anytime we hurt someone's feelings we should always apologize.

Calling grownups "crybabies" is unacceptable because the people of Monroe should be treated fairly and with respect.

Councilman should make Monroe better not worse. You may not care but other people do care, including me.

I am 1%.

4th grader at Monroe Elementary School”

“Dear Mr. Callahan,

One time I shot my dad with a tennis ball launcher. I really didn't mean for it to hurt. I said sorry. You should really apologize to the city because you did something wrong and it hurt.

Sincerely,

A First Grader at Monroe Primary School”

“Dear Mr. Callahan,

I am one percent.

I find your recent comments and actions to be a display of poor judgement on your part and I have serious doubts about your ability to represent the City of Monroe and it's citizens in the manner that they deserve to be represented.

Your lack of empathy towards those who you are supposed to be representing that you have offended with your remarks is astounding to me. And your lack of common sense to realize that an apology was in order is also a huge disappointment. Now that it is too late for an apology, what can you do to earn the trust of the citizens of Monroe? I am wondering if you even care.

Be aware that those of us who disagree with you will not be “hitting the road”. I have lived in Monroe for 15 years, I have raised my child here, and I will not stand by idly as an elected official embarrasses himself and by extensions embarrasses us.

Sincerely,  
Patrick Henry”

“According to the Ohio Public Health Advisory System, as of September 3rd, Butler County is in a level 3 Public Emergency. Tom Callahan's comments regarding wearing masks hasn't helped. What can / will the Monroe City Council do to encourage residents to take precautions, wear masks, social distance, etc. so that we can get to level 1?

Thank you.  
Barbee Sjodahl”

“Dear Members of Monroe Council and Administration,

I must begin by thanking all of you for the job you do every day to govern our City. When done well, your positions take a lot of time and thought in order to adequately represent the interests of those who entrust the City to your care. Until recently, Council members both past and present have worked well together, making compromises when necessary in the best interests of their constituents. That record of cooperation has been marred by the actions of one person.

Like many of my fellow citizens, I was severely concerned about the comments made last month by Tom Callahan, which expressed a lack of sensitivity to those in his community who do not share his background or culture. Clearly I was not alone in my concern. However, despite the comment, I believe there were many like myself who were initially willing to give Mr. Callahan the benefit of the doubt as an inexperienced Council member. I believe citizens wanted to allow him the chance to at least acknowledge that he spoke inappropriately.

I agreed with Mayor Frenzel's observation at a subsequent Council meeting. Even though his words and social media posting demonstrated a clear lack of cultural sensitivity, there was at the time no clear path which Council could take to have him removed simply due to a wildly unpopular opinion or personality. I believe that the City Charter intended for political parties to be undisclosed for election so that Council could fairly and impartially govern local issues without political or cultural divide. In fact, the oath that Mr Callahan took to assume office states that he would "faithfully, honestly and IMPARTIALLY dispatch the duties" of his position as member of Council.

Imagine my shock and disbelief when Mr. Callahan, who had STILL refused to recognize any kind of impropriety, chose to demonstrate even further his lack of ability to govern with any kind of impartial or respectful behavior at the last Council meeting!

Members of Council, I know and understand that most of you are just as appalled at Mr. Callahan's lack of remorse, and are further appalled at the lack of professionalism he demonstrated at the last Council meeting.

Instead of offering any kind of appropriate explanation or apology, Mr Callahan chose to dig himself further into trouble by deliberately offering pacifiers to his constituents who do not hold his belief. This was not a mistake or misstep. This was PLANNED.

When he offered larger pacifiers to his fellow Council members, and used phrases like " I don't care" and " Hit the road", Mr. Callahan made it very ,very clear that he is completely incapable of dispatching his duties impartially.

I fully understand that in today's "cancel culture", Council did not wish to impose punishment on Mr Callahan because of one unpopular misplaced comment or belief.

Freedom of speech should be protected, even when it isn't respectful. However, public officials who represent a diverse population must ALWAYS be held to a higher standard.

Mr Callahan has clearly violated the oath he took to conduct his duties impartially, when he openly insulted his fellow Council members, adn told those who disagreed with him to "hit the road".

I believe that with his most recent "stunt", Mr. Callahan has indeed given Council cause to remove him based upon a VIOLATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE, which is a listed justification for a removal vote in the City Charter.

The Oxford Language definition of impartial is : "treating all rivals or disputants equally fair and just".

On multiple occasions, and NOW with forethought, Mr. Callahan has clearly failed to honor his oath.

I respectfully request that Council reconsider a vote of removal based upon this new development.

If you still believe that removal is too harsh, please at least consider a censure/vote of disapproval and remove Mr. Callahan from all committees.

Mr. Callahan, many more than one percent of your constituents were offended by your initial remarks, but the ball was in your court. You could have healed the divide you created by simply apologizing or even better, attempting to understand that what you said goes far beyond a "black and white" issue. This is now about basic respect and professionalism. I can speak for myself and I believe many others who were not just disappointed by your actions at the last Council meeting.

We were EMBARRASSED. You did nothing to heal a community and even more to hurt it.

In the last meeting, you said that you were a student in military school. As such, I sincerely believe you understand the honor that comes with making a personal sacrifice in order to preserve peace.

I implore you to consider resigning. This issue is not "going away". In fact, I believe your own actions have served to prolong the controversy, and brought discord and unnecessary tension to Council chambers.

You said yourself that you wanted everyone to move on. I do not believe that is possible if you continue to act in the manor which you have chosen.

Please consider resigning in the best interest of this community.

Thank you,  
Kelly Meyer”

Mayor Frentzel noted that these emails have been seen by all of Council. He added that any action that Council may take will need to be discussed with all of Council at a later date.

### ***Committee Reports***

None.

### ***Old Business***

None.

### ***New Business***

**Emergency Resolution No. 60-2020.** A Resolution approving a Then-and-Now Certificate, and ratify the change order in the amount of \$16,309.40 for the ADA Ramp Concrete Replacement Project to W. G. Stang, LLC, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock advised that a change order needs ratified as the bus stop on Salzman Road needed to be moved approximately 150 feet.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 60-2020 on two separate days, authorize its adoption, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Resolution No. 60-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 60-2020; seconded by Mr. Routson. Roll call vote: five ayes. Motion carried.

**Emergency Resolution No. 61-2020.** A Resolution approving a Then-and-Now Certificate in the amount of \$3,600.00 to Civica North America Inc. and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock reported that software was required for income tax during the early days of the pandemic to allow people to submit their documents online.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 61-2020 on two separate days, authorize its adoption on the first reading, and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Emergency Resolution No. 61-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 61-2020; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: five ayes. Motion carried.

**Emergency Resolution No. 62-2020.** A Resolution authorizing specific expenditures of the City of Monroe's share of Coronavirus Relief Funds as legislated in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock informed Council that this resolution identifies those items for reimbursement of approximately \$269,000. Staff is asking Council to approve this resolution and most of the expenses are for public safety.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 62-2020 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. 62-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 62-2020; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: five ayes. Motion carried.

**Resolution No. 63-2020.** A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement by and between the City of Monroe and Fishbeck for professional engineering services to perform a Risk and Resiliency Assessment for the City's public water system.

Mr. Brock stated that by June of 2021 we need a risk and resiliency assessment for the water system. He noted that this type of assessment was required following 9/11.

Mr. Routson asked how much responsibility the City has compared to Butler County since we purchase water from Butler County. Mr. Brock explained that the City's responsibility comes from the distribution system that is still owned by the City, as well as the water towers, software, and meters.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Resolution No. 63-2020 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 63-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Resolution No. 63-2020; seconded by Mr. Routson. Roll call vote: five ayes. Motion carried.

**Resolution No. 64-2020.** A Resolution accepting the amounts and rates as determined by the Budget Commission and authorizing the necessary tax levies and certifying them to the County Auditor.

Mr. Brock commented that this is an annual resolution following the submission of the tax budget to the budget commission.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Resolution No. 64-2020 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 64-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Resolution No. 64-2020; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: seven ayes. Motion carried.

**Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-26.** An Ordinance determining to adjust special assessments levied for the purpose of constructing certain improvements and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock reported that this ordinance and the next involve special assessments that pay bonds off. We receive a report from a third-party every year that sets the special assessment amount. Warren County will then assess those amounts to pay the bonds.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-26 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. 2020-26 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-26; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: five ayes. Motion carried.

**Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-27.** An Ordinance determining to adjust special assessments levied for the purpose of constructing certain improvements and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-27 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. 2020-27 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-27; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: five ayes. Motion carried.

**Consideration of Motion** authorizing a change order to the 2020 Paving Contract in the amount of \$7,510.69 to John R. Jurgensen for new signage on Salzman Road.

Mr. Brock stated that due to the changes made on Salzman Road a change order is necessary for this project.

Mr. Funk moved to authorize a change order to the 2020 Paving Contract in the amount of \$7,510.69 to John R. Jurgensen for new signage on Salzman Road; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

### ***Administrative Reports***

Mr. Brock asked Council if there were any questions about the retreat, utility bills, or proposed wage adjustments. Mrs. Hale asked if there was a meeting place and Mr. Brock replied it is in the South Lebanon area.

Mrs. McElfresh asked who is organizing the retreat and who came up with the idea to go off campus. Mr. Brock advised that he and Mrs. Waggaman are organizing the retreat and to go off campus was part of the discussion with the Mayor and Vice Mayor.

Mayor Frentzel commented that they felt it was best to be off site to reduce the distractions, such as leaving to take their child to football practice, etc. It will still be the same COVID regulations as it would be if we were in Council Chambers. Mr. Funk agreed and going off site to make it a longer event judging on what administration is asking us to collaborate on. We really need to hammer down some initiatives and come to some conclusions.

In response to Mrs. McElfresh's question, Mr. Brock advised that the only attendees will be Council, Mrs. Waggaman, Mrs. Wasson, and himself. He plans on another retreat where department heads will be in attendance. There are some things that need to be set at a higher level.

Mrs. McElfresh asked what the time-frame is and Mr. Brock replied that the agenda is still being putting this together and we would like to look at an 8 to 5 scenario. Mrs. McElfresh will do her best to make that work, but needs to know definitively.

Mayor Frentzel sought Council's thoughts on meeting in-person. Results of a recent survey show it is about 50/50 between in-person meetings and remaining remote.

Mrs. McElfresh stated that she is not quite comfortable of everyone being all together at this time.

Mr. Routson agreed with Mayor Frentzel and appreciate those that have sent emails in. He also feels that live meetings are happening through our county and in other counties and we can be separated as we were in the beginning.

Mr. Routson moved to go back to regular meetings at the City Building and not do this online reporting; seconded by Mrs. Hale.

*Discussion.* Mr. Routson was of the opinion to get back to the Council Chambers and people can come in and we can listen to what they have to say.

Mrs. McElfresh stated that she has an underlying health condition and is not comfortable with having a meeting in person just yet.

Mr. Funk asked Mr. Brock if there was any concern with sanitizing the area or masks to make it feel safe. Mr. Brock advised that we can attempt to make it as comfortable as possible. Mayor Frentzel indicated that we would all be spread out.

Mr. Brock noted that it would take some effort, depending on how long Mayor's Court lasts, to sanitize everything in between Mayor's Court and Council.

Law Director Callahan advised that the Clerk of Courts spoke to him about moving Mayor's Court from 4 p.m. to 3 p.m. to avoid running into the start time for Council meetings.

Mr. Brock also suggested meetings could temporarily be moved to the Monroe Community Room.

Mrs. Wasson asked for clarification as to whether the in-person meetings would be live streamed or the recording placed on the website and/or Facebook later that evening or the next day.

Mr. Routson clarified that his motion is to record the meeting and not to be live meetings as he encourages people to come to the meetings with their concerns rather than emails if we are live on Facebook.

Mr. Frentzel and Mr. Callahan advised that in-person meetings would require people to come to the Council meeting rather than the Clerk of Council reading it into the record. Mr. Callahan added that individual Council members have the right to read emails into the record should they so choose.

Mrs. McElfresh advised that she has received a lot of positive feedback from the community that like these meetings being shown live.

Roll call vote: four ayes; one nay (McElfresh). Motion carried.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to broadcast the Council meetings live; seconded by Mr. Funk.

*Discussion.* Mr. Funk asked if there are any benefits to have these shown live or to put the recording on the website or Facebook after the meeting. Mr. Brock replied it does not affect his staff at all.

Since at this time we are only permitted 10 people in the room, Mayor Frentzel asked if staff could be in the City Manager's conference room with communication with them if we had a question. Mr. Brock will look into that.

Mrs. McElfresh pointed out that it can be done, but did not know if the City had the ability at this time.

Law Director Callahan suggested that the Clerk of Council read the motion back so that everyone knows what they are voting on. The Clerk of Council stated "to broadcast the Council meetings live."

Roll call vote: five ayes. Motion carried.

Mr. Routson commented that the fireworks were as good as we have had in a long time and did not see any problems with overcrowding.

Mr. Routson challenged the voters of Monroe to do research on the people you are voting for. There may be one people may not like very well, but there could be more. Mayor Frentzel agreed with that regardless if you are voting for a local, state, or federal position.

Mr. Funk thanked the residents of the City as they were great with their comments on the fireworks and the way the residents handled themselves in the park it really worked out. Mayor Frentzel commended the Fire, Police, and Public Works Departments on helping put this together.

### ***Adjournment***

Mr. Funk moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Routson. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The regular meeting of Council adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela S. Wasson, MMC

Clerk of Council