

**Monroe Council Minutes
Regular Meeting of Council
April 12, 2016 - 6:30 pm
233 South Main Street, Monroe, Ohio**

Pledge of Allegiance

Followed by the presentation of colors by the Monroe Police Honor Guard, Mayor Routson opened the regular meeting of Council with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:30 pm.

Roll Call

The following members of Council were present: Dan Clark, Jason Frentzel, Keith Funk, Anna Hale, Todd Hickman, Robert Routson, and Suzi Rubin.

Staff members present:

- City Manager/City Engineer William J. Brock
- Law Director K. Philip Callahan
- Director of Public Works Daniel J. Arthur
- Chief of Police Robert Buchanan
- Fire Chief John P. Centers
- Director of Development Kevin Chesar
- Director of Finance Tina Williams
- Assistant to the City Manager/Clerk of Council Angela S. Wasson

Approval of the Minutes

Mrs. Rubin moved to approve the Public Involvement Committee Minutes of March 17 and April 7, 2016; Finance Committee Minutes of March 22, 2016; and Council Minutes of March 22, 2016; seconded by Mr. Clark. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Visitors

K. Philip Callahan, Law Director, performed the ceremonial swearing in of Aaron Ledford as Patrol Officer.

Sean M. Blyth informed Council that he is with The Heroin HopeLine, an organization that provides assistance with those that are addicted to heroin.

Committee Reports

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Administrative Reports

Patrick D. Hoagland of Brandstetter Carroll Inc. gave a presentation on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. He explained how the information was gathered, proposed uses, and implementation.

Mr. Arthur reported to Council that to implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan he would need a dedicated staff member and proposes to promote Brian Perkins, Street Crew Leader, to a Parks/Cemeteries Supervisor. Mr. Perkins would oversee the implementation of a Parks and Recreation Department. With this promotion it would only require hiring an Operator/Laborer II at this time. Some of the immediate updates to the existing parks Mr. Arthur would like to see are:

- installation security cameras and WiFi at Monroe Community Park and Monroe Crossings Park
- new basketball goals at Monroe Community Park and Oaklawn Park - Mr. Hickman requested that these be installed right away. Mr. Arthur will present pricing to City Council for these goals.
- install an entrance sign at Oaklawn Park and resurface and restripe the parking
- develop a plan for Rosemont Park as a nature park
- additional parking at Monroe Community Park and Monroe Crossings Park
- pursue Reds Community Grant with baseball for the clover leaf concept. Mr. Hickman asked that this be reviewed to see if it will fit.
- work with the school on a master plan for the Lemon-Monroe High School site.
- Americana/LeSourdsville Lake Site Study. Mr. Clark expressed the importance of connectivity.
- Trail System and Community Connectivity Master Plan
- accessibility to all facilities that are ADA compliant
- plan for Baker Sports Complex
- organize all of the items needed, funding, and include in the 5 to 10 year Capital Improvement Plan

Mr. Hickman asked when they are going to finish the grading and seeding on Britton Lane. Mr. Arthur advised that the paving will take place when school is out, the leveling course and concrete work will be done, and seed and straw would take place after all of that.

Mr. Chesar reported that Monroe is the missing link in the Great Miami River Trail from Fairfield to Piqua. There is approximately 2.3 miles of trail within our border. During a visit to the area there is a lot of the proposed path that is clear as people have been using it. There are some clearance challenges.

Mr. Chesar encouraged anyone to take time to look at the site within the Americana property and the buildings that could be used. A student project is ongoing with the Americana site that will save us dollars if we move forward with a consultant.

We have met with Ohio Kentucky Regional Council of Governments, Green Umbrella, Miami Conservancy District, Butler County MetroParks, Liberty Township, and Lemon Township to build support for the trail.

Mr. Chesar stated that they do have money in the budget for a downtown corridor study. With respect to visiting the Americana site, Mr. Chesar will work on scheduling a visit.

Mrs. Patterson presented a proposed Economic Development Incentive Policy. For CRA Programs retail is still not considered. Rather than look at the entire City, the proposed policy targets land based on challenged sites and development potential.

We would like to bring in more workforce development partnerships. Focusing on Monroe Local School District and the career center, both of which are very active right now. We have an expectation that the companies would participate in this as well.

Monroe's water is 30% higher than the average water cost in the region and that makes a big difference to high-capacity users. Our water rate is structured so that the more water you use the higher rate you pay. The utility rate is one of the items that prospective businesses bring up. The sanitary sewer rate is 37% lower than the average sewer cost in the region. However, Butler County requires that you purchase an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) and that is 12,000. If the usage is within the ERU's purchased you are billed at one rate and if you go over you are billed for 150% to 200% of the rate. Each ERU is \$4,500. As part of the proposed Policy, she would like to continue to work with Butler County to identify ways to manage ERU costs and allow for the City to share in the purchase of ERU's to benefit a company.

Periodically, she receives requests from companies to give them a rebate on the income tax. As an example, a startup company came to the City and they were so young in their life cycle and the ability to get that money back out and invest it in their facility is huge and a cash flow issue. It could have helped that business grow. You could have a company like Rivertown and would like to feel like the City is really trying to help them. This program is set up that the taxes are paid as normal and the City would review the income and look at the employee withholding. Thereafter, a portion of the net profits tax would be given back to the company. If the employee tax is not substantial then the rebate is fairly small. If the employee tax exceeds the net profits tax, we do not give them the overage.

Mrs. Patterson advised that they are continuing to work with the School Board and would like to bring legislation back to Council in April or May to adopt a policy.

Mr. Brock explained that Council will always have the final approval of a CRA, but this gives staff certain parameters that Council would consider.

Mr. Clark asked if other communities have set guidelines such as this. Mrs. Patterson replied that the City of Middletown recently went through this and Lebanon, Sharonville, and Hamilton has this in writing.

Mrs. Rubin supported the workforce development partnership. She is concerned that preference is shown to certain businesses or certain properties. Mrs. Patterson explained that the specific properties were chosen because they have invested in their property. Mrs. Rubin noted that we have existing businesses that are paying taxes and when you bring in businesses that are not paying taxes, you are still servicing them.

Mr. Clark supports the concept, but wondered how much more industrial Monroe really needs.

Mrs. Rubin and Mr. Hickman would be more open to an office building where employees are paid well.

Mrs. Patterson asked what Council would consider "paid well" for this policy.

Mr. Funk was of the opinion that the average would be in the \$50,000 range for the office space.

Mr. Clark felt that it should be on a sliding scale.

Mrs. Hale stated it should be on a case-by-case basis. Mrs. Patterson replied that we can do that, it will just limit our options.

Mrs. Rubin suggested a points based system and the concern is having set rules because it may not be a business that we want. She noted that the businesses need to be more diversified.

Mr. Clark understood the issue, but felt that it should be a sliding scale.

Mr. Funk felt that if you are bringing an office or research and development it should be every zone and not just the highlighted areas. Mrs. Rubin agreed.

With respect to the utility rate restructuring, Mr. Clark was of the opinion that it should only be for businesses that need it. Mrs. Rubin would like to see how to encourage them to use less water or to recycle that water.

Mayor Routson suggested that the water rates be comparable for both business and residential.

Mr. Funk is okay with the process in trying to lure them in and where this water rate negotiation is in the process, but suggested the City keep the reins a little tighter except for office and research and development.

Mrs. Patterson advised that the ballot question for Sunday sales in the Community Entertainment District should be in November if not before.

Mr. Brock informed Council they should keep in mind the Comprehensive Plan and the revenue stream is not deferred forever. It will grow over time. We are trying to define revenue streams to this City.

Mrs. Williams reported that the Finance Department has been working on amendments to the Purchasing Policies and Procedures. The proposed amendments are 1) offering local vendors a 5% advantage; 2) change the Then-and-Now Certificate to reflect the language of the Ohio Revised Code; 3) increase the purchase order amount from \$100 to \$2,500; 4) increase the amount to be approved by the City Manager from \$500 to \$2,500; 5) increase the amount to be approved by Council from \$10,000 to \$25,000; 6) changing the formal bid process to refer to the Ohio Revised Code; 7) and some housekeeping items.

It was the consensus of Council that the approval by Council increase to \$15,000 and increase the purchase order amount to \$1,000.

Mr. Brock reported that on the next agenda will be the second reading of the amendments to the Administrative Code, an agreement with the Warren County Drug Task Force, recommendations from the Tax Incentive Review Council, a couple of Then-and-Nows, and the purchase of an asphalt grinder.

Chief Buchanan reported that the City will be selling three old cruisers that are valued at approximately \$900.00.

Mr. Clark announced that the Lions Club Scholarship Program gives \$500 to Monroe seniors. The deadline is Friday and so far, no applications have been received.

Chief Buchanan note that this is National Public Safety Communicators week.

Adjournment

Mrs. Rubin moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Council meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela S. Wasson, CMC
Clerk of Council