

**Monroe Council Minutes
Regular Meeting of Council
December 15, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.
233 South Main Street, Monroe, Ohio**

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Roll Call

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

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

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Funk moved to approve the Finance Committee Minutes and Council Minutes of November 24, 2020; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Visitors

Hearing no objection from members of Council, the Clerk of Council read the following email into the record.

“Council members,

As much as I would have liked to been able to read this letter in person at the meeting, I think it unwise at this time due to the surge in Covid cases, and I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to read my words.

As we all know, the days are short and becoming colder, and will continue to do so for the coming months. This can be a time of mental distress during the most “normal” of times, but with the additional stress of a global pandemic, I fear for the health and well-being of our community members. If you’ve been paying attention, you will have noticed that mental health and the general spirit of our community is declining. This is evident in our homes, work environments, and across social media platforms as people are struggling. As leaders of our city, I would like to know from you what is possible to promote the mental well-being of your residents.

It has also been evident for several months now that there has been a divide amongst residents for a plethora of reasons. While I believe those reasons are

important and worth reflecting upon, for the time being I'd like to steer the focus toward unity and taking steps to move forward in an attempt to heal the divide. So I would also like to know from our leadership what you plan to do to help foster a sense of unity in Monroe. I know these times are challenging, but you hold these seats with the intention to make our community a better place for all its people. I believe now more than ever we need you to create that "small town feel" that was so highly spoken of during your 2020 retreat.

I have two suggestions regarding these points.

I believe it would be incredibly valuable to consult a mental health professional and work with them to create virtual content available to the public with no additional expense to the residents. This could easily be presented via social media, including the city's Facebook page and YouTube.

I would also like to see Monroe engage in and promote events that can be done safely and accessibly in an effort to bring residents together. Perhaps we can start with the city's help in promoting the Christmas Eve Jingle, planned by the residents themselves. I would be happy to share the details of this event with you if you are interested in helping bring a little cheer to a community that really needs it.

Thank you for your time & consideration. I greatly look forward to learning what our council is capable of doing for the well being of its citizens.

Sincerely,

Katie Wagner"

Mrs. McElfresh reiterated suggestions she made in an email to Council that it would be good to have a professional speak about depression. Perhaps a video or some words of encouragement from members of Council. We all support the community while we may not vocalize it at every meeting of Council. Perhaps a community message of encouragement from Council, the Mayor, or City Manager; provided, it is all inclusive as all of Council feels this way. It could be followed up by a video from a health care professional to speak about this subject.

Mrs. McElfresh explained the two events referenced in Mrs. Wagner's email. The first is at 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve where you go outside and ring a bell and everyone in Monroe could do this. In a small way it could bring the community together. The bells can be picked up at Spiritwear. The other event is the Christmas Light Display listing and encourages people to drive around to see the displays.

Mr. Hickman, Mayor Frentzel, and Mr. Funk all agreed on advertising the events. Mr. Funk encouraged that the City focus on getting more positive messages out.

Mr. Brock added that policies will need to be in place to determine what messages go out and how often in addition to reaching out to the community and the organizations.

Mr. Hickman suggested that Chief Centers reach out to his Medical Director and see what she could supply to the City for posting.

Mrs. McElfresh suggested that the Public Involvement Committee could be the conduit for these events.

Mrs. McElfresh asked if it is possible to do a virtual tree lighting and Mr. Brock advised that it is possible.

Committee Reports

None.

Old Business

Resolution No. 82-2020. A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract by and between the City of Monroe and Hurst Kelly and Co. LLC for services related to the completion of the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for fiscal year ending December 31, 2020. (Second Reading)

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the second reading of Resolution No. 82-2020 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 82-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Resolution No. 82-2020; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 83-2020. A Resolution adoption the October 16, 2020, Strategic Planning Report Vision Statement, and Strategic Priorities. (Second Reading)

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the second reading of Resolution No. 83-2020 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 83-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Resolution No. 83-2020; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

New Business

Emergency Resolution No. 84-2020. A Resolution accepting donations from various donors as further described herein and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock explained this accepts donations received throughout the year and include donations from the Barnets through the Middletown Community Foundation, park donation from the Housh estate, donation of trees from the Lions Club, Community Outreach donations from Enterprise Products, Dr. Frank James, and Treasure Aisles.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 84-2020 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. 84-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 84-2020; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Emergency Resolution No. 85-2020. A Resolution approving blanket purchase orders as recommended by the Director of Finance and the City Manager and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock advised that this allows us to put the blanket purchase orders in place for 2021.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 85-2020 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. 85-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 85-2020; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Emergency Resolution No. 86-2020. A Resolution approving a Then-and-Now Certificate in the amount of \$3,785.00 to DryPatrol LLC and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Brock noted that the resolution is related to special cleaning of the City Building.

Mrs. McElfresh asked if the expense will have to be made following every occurrence of those that test positive. Mr. Brock replied that it will be.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Emergency Resolution No. 86-2020 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. 86-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Emergency Resolution No. 86-2020; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 87-2020. A Resolution instructing the Director of Finance to request an advancement of taxes assessed and collected on behalf of the City of Monroe from the Auditors of Butler and Warren Counties.

Mr. Brock stated this will request an advancement of property taxes collected by the Butler and Warren County Auditors.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Resolution No. 87-2020 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Resolution No. 87-2020 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Resolution No. 87-2020; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 2020-34. An Ordinance, amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 2020-28, otherwise known as the permanent appropriations ordinance, to meet current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Monroe, during fiscal year ending December 31, 2020.

Mr. Brock stated that this is the cleanup for the end of the year appropriations.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Ordinance No. 2020-34 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 Ordinance No. 2020-34 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2020-34; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 2020-35. An Ordinance, otherwise known as the temporary appropriations ordinance, to meet current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Monroe, during fiscal year ending December 31, 2021.

Mr. Brock commented that it is the temporary appropriations for 2021.

Mr. Funk moved to suspend the rule requiring the reading of Ordinance No. 2020-35 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 Ordinance No. 2020-35 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2020-35; seconded by Mr. Callahan. Roll call vote please: six ayes. Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 2020-36. An Ordinance amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 2020-03 to authorize a 3% cost of living to nonunion employees.

Mr. Brock advised that this is the cost of living adjust for all non union employees.

Mr. Hickman asked if the City Manager was part of this legislation to receive the 3% cost of living. Mr. Brock replied that he would as it is written.

Mayor Frentzel pointed out that should something be negotiated in the City Manager's agreement that language could be removed before the second reading.

Mr. Hickman asked if the 3% increase would be added to all of the amounts listed in the exhibit and Mr. Brock replied that the exhibit reflects the 3% already added.

Mr. Hickman noted the language contained in the legislation that, Mr. Brock did not want included, concerns two people that did not receive a raise this year because they were already at their maximum. Going forward, it could be 20 people next year or the year after that. Mr. Hickman stated that there was an employee that received over an \$11,000 raise this year and now they will get an additional 3%. He sees a problem with that.

Mayor Frentzel referenced Mr. Hickman's comment that while there are only two employees at this time that are at their maximum, the range would continue to increase as they would still be entitled the cost of living authorized by Council. Therefore, you will be probably only be concerned with the two employees that exceed their maximum range.

Mr. Hickman felt that an \$11,000 increase in one year and to add the 3% is extreme.

Mr. Funk commented, while I do think the \$11,000 is a bit much, it is a one-time thing until perhaps the next wage study. If we want to make adjustments in the future we can.

Mr. Hickman objected to the wage study initially and there is more in that study and it is just around the corner. In addition, we are setting the cost of living to 3% when it is actually only 1.3%. We have employees receiving this, an increase, and a merit increase. He is not opposed to raises; however, felt it should be fair.

Mr. Funk agreed that it seems extreme in some areas, but at the end of the day it was all about calibration. That is what the wage study was for.

Mrs. McElfresh respects Mr. Hickman's opinion and Mr. Funk's. She asked if it will be voted on now or wait and discuss during executive session.

Mayor Frentzel again noted this is only the first reading and we can make changes at the second reading. When we discuss the City Manager's contract in executive session we can make any changes, if necessary.

Mrs. McElfresh was of the opinion that any cost of living adjustment for the City Manager should be included in his agreement.

Mrs. McElfresh moved to remove “and non union employees not included in Exhibit “1”” from Section 3; seconded by Mr. Hickman. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Ordinance No. 2020-36 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Ordinance No. 2020-36 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2020-36; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: five ayes; one nay (Hickman). Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 2020-37. An Ordinance amending Exhibit “1” of Ordinance No. to establish the positions of GIS Analyst and Human Resources Manager and the pay ranges for said position.

Mr. Brock reported that this would add the positions of GIS Analyst and Human Resources Manager to the list of employees. He referred to the job descriptions sent to Council.

Mr. Hickman asked how many other positions are on the study that remain to be hired. Mr. Brock could not recall, but during the retreat we talked about a Public Information Officer and someone over parks.

Mayor Frentzel asked what the pay ranges are requested for these positions. Mr. Brock advised that the Human Resources Manager is pay grade 7 (\$68,500.00 to \$96,025.00) and the GIS Analyst is pay grade 6 (\$61,893.94 to \$86,651.51).

Referring to the Human Resources Manager, Mayor Frentzel understood there are employees that perform the hiring, workers compensation, and FMLA. He asked if they would be incorporated to that Human Resources Manager and what happens with those employees that are currently performing those duties. Mr. Brock replied that some of those duties would be consolidated under the Human Resources Manager and the HR Specialist would report to the Human Resources Manager and perform those duties.

Mayor Frentzel asked if, for example, hiring is taken away from an employee that has been doing that, what happens to that employee’s position. Mr. Brock explained that we could reanalyze that position within the framework within the compensation study and make sure their duties still align with that and give the employee other duties to take place with what would be consolidated under the Human Resources Manager.

In response to Mr. Hickman’s question, Mr. Brock advised that the HR Specialist is Deana England.

Mrs. McElfresh asked if the HR Specialist now is not handling the HR components. Mr. Brock explained that the HR components are handled by himself, Mrs. Waggaman, Mrs. Wasson, and Ms. England. Mr. Brock further explained that the intent is to solidify this position because even parts of HR are handled within the departments. In order to meet the strategic goal of being

consistent and having well managed services we need to consolidate these things under one individual.

Mrs. McElfresh understood that as City Manager, Mr. Brock assigns duties to staff within reason and happens frequently. Mr. Brock noted it can. Mrs. McElfresh saw this as nothing different as far as the realigning of the job descriptions and job duties.

Mr. Funk felt we are in a growing pain and cities bigger than Monroe have HR Directors and cities smaller than us have always performed this under the City Manager's office.

Mrs. McElfresh was of the opinion that Monroe needs to have a designated HR person. She is also looking at the salary that goes along with this, not including benefits, and what that cost is. We do not know what is coming in the future, but we need to be conservative. To be responsible in how we grow we can't have it all at once. We do need to have a dedicated HR person. HR, in her opinion, trumps a GIS Analyst position. Mrs. Hale agreed.

Mr. Brock noted that both positions are included in the temporary appropriations and felt that both positions are vital for the organization.

Mayor Frentzel agreed with what Mrs. McElfresh is saying to have those components all under one person and understands the need for the GIS Analyst. Mayor Frentzel asked if the GIS Analyst is something we need immediately or can we wait another six months to see where we are at financially. Mr. Brock stated that all of the departments felt the GIS Analyst is something that would benefit all of them.

Mrs. McElfresh asked if the HR Specialist is able to take the Human Resources Manager responsibilities. Mr. Brock replied that she could not as it requires a higher level position.

Mr. Hickman asked if the Human Resources Manager would only be managing the HR Specialist. Mr. Brock explained that would be the only position they would manage, but they would also be managing the HR process.

Mrs. McElfresh is in support for a Human Resources Manager, but agrees with the Mayor and wait until spring and reassess the need for a GIS Analyst.

Mr. Funk is not looking at it as one or other, they are both listed in the budget and if the City Manager feels it is necessary we need to trust his position until that trust isn't there.

Mr. Brock informed Council that budgetarily what we were spending on consultant services and what we were getting, it is an increase for the GIS Specialist, but not significant. Mayor Frentzel requested the difference in expenditures for a consultant and the position at the next meeting.

Mr. Funk moved to consider this the first reading of Ordinance No. 2020-37 and have it read by title only; seconded by Mr. Callahan. Voice vote. Motion carried.

The Clerk of Council read Ordinance No. 2020-37 by title only.

Mr. Funk moved to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2020-37; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Roll call vote: three ayes; three nays (Callahan, Hickman, and McElfresh). Motion failed.

Consideration of Motion accepting the August and September 2020 Finance Reports as submitted.

Mr. Funk moved to accept the August and September 2020 Finance Reports as submitted; seconded by Mrs. Hale. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Consideration of Motion appointing a member of Council to the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments.

Mr. Funk moved to appoint Mr. Hickman to the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Administrative Reports

Mr. Brock inquired about Council's desire to adopt a policy to extend some of the COVID leave coverages into 2021. We can do this locally up until December 31, 2020. The Federal law expires at the end of this year and he hasn't seen any indication of an extension of this. We still have the pandemic, employees with childcare issues, and quarantine issues. If there is something that Council wants to do to provide short term leave for these purposes into 2021 we can begin to prepare that policy in legislation for your next meeting.

In addition, Mr. Brock requested that Council begin thinking about vaccines for employees as to whether it should be mandatory or an incentive for employees to receive the vaccine.

Mrs. McElfresh asked if it is possible to offer a location in Monroe to provide community vaccinations and Mr. Brock advised that they are working on that.

Mayor Frentzel thanked Darren Murphy for getting the Council Chambers set up to make live meetings more accommodating. When we do have everyone in Chambers again everyone will have their own individual cameras. He appreciates all of his hard work. Mrs. McElfresh stated the view from being remote is so much better and thanked Mr. Murphy for all of his hard work.

- **Executive Session** – To consider the employment and compensation of public employees.

Mr. Funk moved adjourn into executive session to consider the appointment of public officials and the employment and compensation of public employees; seconded by Mrs. McElfresh. Roll call vote: six ayes. Motion carried.

Council adjourned into executive session at 8:06 p.m.

Mr. Hickman moved to reconvene into regular session; seconded Mrs. McElfresh.

Council reconvened into regular session at 9:35 p.m.

Consideration of Motion appointing certain members to the various boards and commissions.

Mr. Funk moved to appoint Chad Jackson to the partial term and David Kirkpatrick to the Planning Commission; Michael Morris to the Board of Zoning Appeals; Paul Koloszar to the Park and Recreation Board; Kelly Clark to the Personnel Board; Shawn Jenkins to the partial term and Steven Newsome to the full term to the Local Board of Tax Review; Mary Maurer to the Audit Committee; and Linda Tucker, Casey Walters, Michael Morris, Vicki Hickman, Kelly Clark, Colleen Taylor, Kara Brown, and Katie Wagner to the Charter Review Commission; seconded by Mr. Callahan. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Adjournment

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

The regular meeting of Council adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela S. Wasson, MMC
Clerk of Council