

Willard, Ohio
February 7, 2022

The Council of the City of Willard, Ohio met in regular session on Monday, February 7, 2022, with the President of Council calling the meeting to order. The meeting was opened with prayer by Pastor Bart McKelvey, CMA church.

Roll Call: Babcock, McKenzie, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, Olson and Sattig present.

MINUTES: Minutes of the Council meeting held January 18, 2022, were presented for approval. In that copies of the minutes were furnished to each Councilperson prior to the meeting, there was no request they be read. Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that they be approved as received. In a called vote therein Babcock, McKenzie, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, Olson and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

CITIZENS DISCUSSION: Kevin Thaxton, 572 W Emerald Street, Came before City Council with allegations of improper use of City vehicles on personal time and recklessness.

BID PROPOSALS: None

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS:

1. Personnel Appeals Board- Karen Robinson agreed to another term on the Personnel Appeals Board. Moved by Olson, seconded by McKenzie. In a called vote therein Babcock, McKenzie, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, Olson, and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS:

TABLED ITEMS: Sidewalk construction on the proposed site of Stor-N-Lock on Theo Moll Drive.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

1. *Charter/Legislative – McKenzie, Johnson*
2. *Finance – Johnson, Olson, Sattig*
3. *Public Works – Babcock, Daniel*
4. *Safety – Babcock, Daniel, Olson*
5. *Utilities – McKenzie, Daniel, Olson*

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS: None

CITY MANAGER REPORT:

Bryson Hamons, City Manager, started off by announcing for the record, that he had not talked to Mr. Thaxton, and he had no knowledge of his allegations.

The next Second Harvest food giveaway is scheduled for Tuesday, March 1st, from 3-5 p.m. The City is thankful for Second Harvest and the volunteers that assist in making this giveaway possible.

On February 1st, a 90% design meeting was held with Prime A/E, the engineering firm that is designing the upgrades for the water treatment plant. Upon City Council's approval, the plan is to have everything finalized to send to the EPA for their review by March 4, then send the project out to bid in August. Unfortunately, with the supply shortages and the demand it will cause the projected project cost to rise.

Dan Thornton, City of Willard Engineer, spoke and explained further that The Water Treatment Plant Project started 2 years ago with a general plan from Prime A/E, the design phase happened at the beginning of last year, now it is at the 90% review phase, and ready to apply for funding through the Ohio EPA Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance (DEFA). Thornton explained the estimated cost for the Water Treatment System Improvements is expected to be \$6.9 million. One change from the original plan is the build of a new larger clarifier, instead of trying to fix two smaller clarifiers that have not been operational for 5 years. There are issues due to supply and demand with chemical companies, purchasing some chemicals in bulk to have on hand, and the contracting of chemical prices is unavailable currently. He also explained how the Water Capital Revenue Collection, currently increasing interest rates, and supply and demand have an impact on the project's estimated cost.

Babcock asked if this project is financially on the City, and if the EPA would have any money towards it?

Thornton replied, we are going to assume that we need the loan for the total amount and apply for principal forgiveness; however, the City only meets 2 out of 3 qualifications for funding due to not having high enough yearly water rates for the City residents. Clarifications as to if water rates and sewer rates are combined or if water rates alone are the specified criteria will be investigated.

Hamons added, the City meets 2 out of 3 requirements by the EPA. The EPA is putting more money into infrastructure, and they might consider it. Hamons also recognized that the City wants to keep water rates as low as possible for City residents.

Sattig asked if the electrical panel, pumps, and all coming in from a foreign country or is it American made?

Thornton replied that it is American made, and most of the agreements contracted with DEFA are for American made products as much as possible.

The 224 Sidewalk Project is still underway, at the guidance of ODOT, the City has applied for additional funding through a Systemic Safety Grant. The additional funding will be used for expected right of way/easement acquisitions and other construction costs. The City previously received an ODOT Safety Grant for the project that covered 100% of the cost of the engineering and construction, but not the right of way acquisition. The new Systemic Safety application will cover the right of way acquisition but does require a 10% local match. An additional \$421,200 was requested in the new application, which would make the City responsible for \$46,800. Unfortunately, the project cost is rising again but, if the City stops the 224 Sidewalk Project now, the City will have to pay engineering fees and it could jeopardize future ODOT projects.

Residents on the 600 block of Euclid were facing low gas pressure and potential gas outage. Columbia Gas replaced approximately 400 feet of 4-inch plastic line in the 400 block of Euclid between Laurel Street and Tiffin Streets. Doing so increased the gas volume in the 600 block of Euclid. Subcontractors will return later to correct any damage made to the street, sidewalk, and yards.

The 2008 Pierce Velocity Aerial Ladder Truck recently received ten new tires. The new tires replaced the original tires that were 14 years old.

Due to the winter storm, the deadline to turn in applications for the open police dispatch position has been extended to Wednesday, February 9th, at noon. The test is at 6pm that evening. The deadline to turn in water meter reader applications remains Friday, February 11th at noon, with the test on Wednesday, February 16th, at 6pm.

The City recently had 4 water main breaks within a week. Thank you to the Maintenance Department for quickly fixing these breaks and maintaining water service.

The Park and Recreation Department recently applied for a \$20,000 grant through the Campbell Soup Foundation. If received, the grant will go towards installing a Fit Core Extreme Fitness Course (Ninja Warrior -like structure) at the park. This is the same grant that has allowed the City to put in new sidewalks at the park. Thank you, Pepperidge Farm, for nominating the City to apply for the grant.

Recently the Park and Recreation Department was able to sell some used tillers and playground equipment on GovDeals, which brought \$2,125.

The Maintenance and Park employees recently replaced two roofs at the park. They replaced the asphalt roof on the small garage that is on the farm property with a new metal one. This garage was part of the old farmhouse that previously sat at this location. The West End restrooms also received a new metal roof.

AEP informed us that PUCO (Public Utilities Commission of Ohio) approved a rate increase of a little more than 5% on the electric and a 19% increase on the streetlights. Last year the City spent \$380,832 on electricity, including streetlights (streetlights are billed per light not usage). The increase potentially could cost the City approximately \$30,000 more.

The City has been working with Fisher-Titus to prepare a bid package for contractors to bid on the reservoir paving project. Fisher-Titus has committed \$200,000 for this project, with an estimated \$100,000 to be raised locally, thus far 5 generous donors have donated \$10,000 each. Bid packages will be going out February 8th with an opening date of February 24th.

Four property owners have submitted Demolition and Site Revitalization Program applications to the Huron County Land Bank. The landbank is overseeing state funds that have been issued to each county for Brownfield Remediation/Demolition and Site Revitalization Program. Two of the submitted properties were residential and two commercial properties.

Hamons asked the City to start thinking about a possible date for the 4th of July fireworks and Trick or Treating. The recommended dates are July 2nd, with July 3rd being the rain date for fireworks; and Trick or Treat to remain on that Thursday as usual.

Council requested to accept the following donations

\$500 from Mayor Joe Daniel towards the Police Community Action Fund

\$5,000 from the Willard Moose Lodge towards the Tree Commission Fund, for the Tree Reimbursing Program

\$3,315.10 from the Willard Moose Lodge towards the Recreation Fund (playground equipment)

\$100 from Don and Shirley Leininger towards the Clock Tower Fund

Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that the donations be accepted by Council. In a called vote, Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

Olson asked what was the cost of the tires for the ladder truck? Hamons informed Council that the tires cost \$8,000. Olson then asked if we had them all? Hamons said that we did have them all, the back tires were replaced before the year was over, there was a supply issue, but the steering tires did get replaced. Once they got the tires, they found out that there was a special tool that they needed for the front ones. Pierce, the manufacturer of the ladder truck, bought the tool and sent it to us for us to use, and now we are sending it back so they can share it with others. Olson also wanted to share her appreciation of The Second Harvest food giveaway; she hears others appreciate it as well.

McKenzie asked if Hamons was able to get ahold of property owners about the other properties downtown? Hamons has not yet but has plans to do so.

Johnson asked about the 224 Sidewalk Project, if or when it happens, who is responsible for sidewalk maintenance? Thornton answered that once the project is done, maintenance is city responsibility, snow removal will be the property owner's responsibility. Johnson commented on seeing someone walking on US 224 pulling a cart; sidewalks would eliminate that problem but, he did not know if it would -if snow removal is property owners' responsibility. Hamons stated that it is a problem if people do not clear their sidewalks. Hamons continued that after this storm he gives props City residents, for helping their neighbors with snow removal and snow blowing sidewalks around entire blocks. Johnson asked if the City would be keeping the walking path at the reservoir clean year-round? Hamons stated that first concern is taking care of the City roads, decisions are not made yet but, probably won't. Johnson asked for a date for Spring Cleanup. Hamons has a tentative date, will update soon.

Babcock asked, regarding the donations from the Moose, for the Tree Commission Fund and playground equipment; has there been any plans for Secor Park? He would like to see more trees planted there and asked there was a layout for it yet? Hamons said they have not done anything with it. He is concerned with taking on more than they can serve, there are options but no definite plans yet.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE A TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE CREATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES FUND 258 IN THE AMOUNT OF SEVEN THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FOUR DOLLARS AND FIFTY-FIVE CENTS (\$7,374.55) IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FUNDING PRIOR TO A REIMBURSING GRANT BEING RECEIVED, AND REPAY THE TRANSFER AFTER THE FUNDS ARE REIMBURSED. Was presented by Council President for its first reading by title only. This was done by the Council Clerk.

COUNCIL/MAYOR COMMENTS:

Mayor Daniel- "Great job to the City, with the snow removal and what they were facing. I did not receive any complaints, except for the gentleman tonight. I know of a factory that closed for two days and that is an unheard-of thing to happen." The Mayor was also pleased at how hard working and congenial Columbia Gas was while making the repair. They were courteous to residents and voluntarily moved equipment for residents who live in the area. The Mayor shared his personal experience and was pleased with the workers.

Babcock Thanks the City Maintenance Department. "Our Maintenance Department is phenomenal, they work a lot of long, hours, with a lot less rest and I would ask anybody who thinks they can do better, to get behind the wheel."

Johnson appreciates that someone who lives on his block that took it upon himself to clear snow off the sidewalks. Thank you to all who cleared sidewalks for neighbors and entire blocks.

Olson also wanted to share her appreciation for those that helped neighbors. She noticed it in her neighborhood and other neighborhoods as well, and to the people who looked after the elderly, to make sure that people could get in to care for them. She is proud of the City, she had not heard of any complaints or negativity towards our City like she had of other Cities. Hats off to our community, they did a great job.

Teri Irvine, 703 Clark Street, came before Council to recognize the fabulous job by the City snowplow drivers. Her concern is people parking on the streets after the parking ban warnings; She is concerned for the City snowplow drivers' safety if they were to hit a car parked illegally, and for emergency responders who have to zigzag through parked cars during an emergency. She also wanted to recognize her fabulous neighbors and how her and grandchildren help neighbors. On another positive note Teri appreciates the improvements at the parks and how well they look.

Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that Council adjourn. In a called vote therein Babcock, Daniel, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

President of Council

Clerk of Council