

## **THE MINUTES OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

**August 20, 2024**

The Meeting of City Council was called to order at 7:30 p.m. with Mayor Jerry Barilla presiding. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by Roll Call.

Present were Council members McManamon, Walker, Albaugh, Gorman, Hernon, Hoover, & Mayo.

Also present; City Manager Jim Mavromatis, Law Director Costa Mastros, Parks and Recreation Director Lori Fetherolf, Linda Harris of the Herald Star, & WTOV9.

### **APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Minutes were approved by Mr. Walker for August 13, 2024. Second by Mr. Albaugh. Roll Call. All ayes. So moved minutes accepted declared Mayor Barilla.

### **PETITIONS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Mayor Barilla – “Petitions and Communications Madame Clerk?”

Mrs. Haley – “Nothing this evening.”

Mayor Barilla – “Thank you Madam Clerk.”

### **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

#### **NO. 2024-64 – BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE – 3<sup>rd</sup> reading**

**Messrs. McManamon, Hernon, Gorman**

#### **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.**

Mayor Barilla – “You’ve heard the third and final reading of Resolution No. 2024-64. If there is anyone wishing to speak on Resolution No. 2024-64 please step forward and state your name and address.”

Mr. McManamon called question. Roll Call. All ayes. So moved Resolution No. 2024-64 is duly adopted declared Mayor Barilla. This resolution will go into effect on September 19, 2024.

#### **NO. 2024-65 – BY THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE – 2<sup>nd</sup> reading**

**Messrs. Mayo, Hoover, Walker**

#### **AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAW FOR THE PURCHASE OF NECESSARY SUPPLIES FOR USE IN THE SERVICE DEPARTMENT, AND TO PROVIDE FOR A CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF SAID MATERIALS FOR THE YEAR 2025, AUTHORIZING THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO OF CONTRACTS AND PAYMENT THEREOF.**

#### **NO. 2024-66 – BY THE PLANNING COMMITTEE – 2<sup>nd</sup> reading**

**Messrs. Hernon, Mayo, McManamon**

#### **AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER AND URBAN PROJECTS DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS FOR THE STEUBENVILLE NORTH CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD EARLY ACTION PROJECT, SUBJECT TO THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO CONTRACT WITH LOWEST AND MOST QUALIFIED BIDDER, AND AUTHORIZING PAYMENT THEREFORE.**

**NO. 2024-67 – BY COUNCIL AS A WHOLE – 2<sup>nd</sup> reading**  
**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE AMOUNT OF FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$5,000.00) TO BE DONATED TO THE HISTORIC FORT STEUBEN TO BE USED FOR ITS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS AT THE FORT PROGRAM FOR 2024.**

**NO. 2024-68 – BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Messrs. McManamon, Hernon, Gorman**

**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DISBURSEMENT OF GRANT FUNDS FROM THE OHIO AMBULANCE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

Mayor Barilla – “You’ve heard the reading of Ordinance No. 2024-68. If there is anyone wishing to speak on Ordinance No. 2024-68 please step forward and state your name and address.”

Mr. McManamon called question. Roll Call. All ayes. So moved Ordinance No. 2024-68 is duly adopted declared Mayor Barilla. This resolution will go into effect upon the Mayor’s signature.

**NO. 2024-69 – MOTION MADE BY MR. McMANAMON. SECOND BY MR. HERNON – 1<sup>st</sup> reading**  
**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE PARKS DIRECTOR AND/OR CITY MANAGER TO OBTAIN THREE (3) ESTIMATES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF A DOME OVER THE TENNIS COURTS AT BELLEVIEW PARK.**

## **REPORT OF COMMITTEES**

### **Finance:**

Mr. McManamon – Mr. McManamon called for an Economic Development Comm. Meeting on September 24, 2024 starting at 6:00 p.m. and Cassandra from Aspire will be presenting. Mr. McManamon also called for a Finance Comm. Meeting on September 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. where Dave Lewis will go over the monthly reports. Mr. McManamon also talked about the budget workshops coming up and the first one will start on October 1<sup>st</sup> because of the retirements the city has coming up for some individuals. Mr. McManamon also mentioned that he talked to Dave Lewis about the health insurance program benefits and the increases in the year 2023 and 2024. 2023 increased 26.91% and in 2024 it increased 19.3% and he talked to Dave about getting together with the consultant and getting an early start on that.

### **Service:**

Mr. Hernon – No Report

### **Safety & Health:**

Mr. Mayo – No Report

### **Planning:**

Mr. Hernon – “Yes, just two items your honor. One is just a thank you to Jim and Chris Petrossi, we had a business owner who was interested in cleaning up some of the vacant properties, particularly up in LaBelle, either by purchase and maintaining. And Jim and Chris, Jim met with them twice, and Chris met with them and connected them with the land bank. And it's great to see somebody who's interested in putting their money where their mouth is, but our city employees help facilitate that. It's in process, and it looks very positive that they'll be able to acquire a couple of properties and clean them up and maintain them, mowing them and keeping them trims so that maybe they come off of our demo rules or wait to be seen which ones they choose. But that's at least the disposition of this business owner to do that. So thanks Jim and Chris for that, which kind of leads me to a question that I just want to pose to us is last week, Jim announced the retirements of both Chris Petrossi and Anthony Bodo. And I just think that this is a unique opportunity for us as council to consider, what do we do with the planning? This is a big shift in leadership personnel. It's policy. Do we like

the job descriptions, or we like how these positions are structured? Is this an opportunity for us to think something through last year earlier, we talked about economic development, we kind of nixed the position as a new position, but we have two positions that are in the same department that have an impact on us in planning, I just want to put it out there for Council. I have some ideas, but I don't know if Council is interested in kind of opening that conversation up in the very near future, because Jim's going to be getting ready to get them out, because they have served our city for a number of years, and it served the city well, but it does give us an opportunity. I don't know if other members of Council have any comment or thought of that."

Ms. Hoover – "I do. I just because I spoke briefly to Jim about it as well. So I think it's something that we do need to actively look into, because with Mr. Bodo getting ready to retire, my question to Jim was, who do we have to fill his shoes? And from what I'm hearing, just through construction business, because I know a lot of people that work in that, that not too many people are pursuing that specific career pathway or that license to be certified to assist us, and I, even as an educator, I don't know anybody, a former student or any of colleagues that I know that knows somebody in that place. So I think that we need to start thinking about where we're going to go with that position, and who are we looking to fill that position. I know that there were some comments earlier with state inspectors, and Jim had some information on those as well as some others that I've spoken to. So I'd like to bring that conversation to see what are the pros and cons to having our own building inspector available, if there's somebody here that can fill that position, or if we need to look at going through the state. But again, I want to weigh out the options and see what's going to be most beneficial to our residents and our projects that are happening here."

Mr. Hernon – "Yeah, agree. Thank you. Any other comments or thoughts?"

Mr. Mayo – "I have a couple things with those two positions, I don't know that it would have to be your charter review to change versus description work, because city planning is more important than economic development, because it does."

Mr. Hernon – "Absolutely."

Mr. Mayo – "It does everything. So I don't know that we as a Council would change that per se, unless part of the charter review that you change that job description."

Ms. Hoover – "I just want, I want to comment after you review, because I was at the last meeting and you were out of town, that's all."

Mr. Mayo – "So and Mr. Bodo, particularly, I don't know that with the projects we have and the complaints we were getting, and he was right here in town, how much we would actually be able to get done with somebody coming in once a week, or every two weeks. So I don't know what Mr. Bodo's plan is. I don't even know what Mr. Petrossi's plan is, but I think we may even have to contract them to work until we because we just can't have those and look for six months."

Mr. Mavromatis – "I'll cover this."

Mr. Mayo – "Okay, so that's, yeah, that's just my take."

Ms. Hoover – "Tracy did bring it up at the last charter review meeting and asking them if we needed to look at the charter we if we weren't going to make significant changes. But again, we're still kind of gathering data, and you know, I was waiting for Jim, he'll, or Jim will give us some information as well as to what Anthony's plans are."

Mr. Hernon – "Yeah, so it's something I think that we should, as a Council, have a committee, have a discussion, so that we're aware of options, pros and cons. Look at what we want, knowing that we had these positions from 10, 20, 30 years. You know the descriptions as is, is that still our current best needs? Is that best practices, whether it be charter review, whether it just be a job description, how does that? What does that look like? I'd like to bring that up in the future for our committee, but maybe we'll wait and see what Jim says after his report, and we as a Council can bring that forward again."

Mr. McManamon – "May I suggest Jim, since we have this on the floor, you want to share what you had to share?"

Mr. Mavromatis – "Yeah, that's fine. When I briefed Council last week that was the information I had. What I require for a simple reason is, I want it on paper. I want a retirement request, a date on it, because once I okay it, I'm covered. I don't have to rescind it to anything. I don't have that for Mr. Bodo, not that he won't give me one. So when I talk with him, his concern because of what he feels in this city, and replacing him, it's very difficult to find a building inspector that has the credentials he

does and could sign off on everything. If he walked out today, he would have to rely on the state of Ohio, and then it's very, very slim to get some; we even checked in the consortium that's south of here. I think there's three counties involved, and they didn't want to take even support Jefferson County because of the work that they have there. So these are the difficulties there and that's when I initially brought up about they don't want to walk away from the city and leave and naked with nobody here. Both of them indicated that they were willing to work the first 60 days with no pay because they're independently blocked, so to speak, from the State of Ohio, you cannot pull retirement for 60 days, and you can't work for your same employment that you had unless if they hire you back as a contractor after 60 days. So that's where that part's at. There's no change in that. Several different ways you can do that. I asked him to find someone that has the certifications to do what Mr. Bodo does is very hard to find. I mean, you can, you can look, and we can start looking. Again what the offer that I mentioned with those two mainly now it's, it's Mr. Petrossi right now, as Mr. Bodo told me, after making calls again down to the PDRS, he looks more like January 30<sup>th</sup> at the end of the year. I'm not getting here, but the beginning of the new tax year, and I understand that part, but the bottom line is, we're still here with two key employees here. How do you attack that? Well, one of the ways is that we have to change our T.O. get assistant in those positions where they can be properly trained and get the certifications that they need, that's an option there. Or the other is, clearly, hire somebody that can walk in there, and that's going to be extremely difficult with the certifications that are needed. So this is, this is what I'm looking at now, just so you also know, there are other people that are going to be retiring here next year. Their time is coming up, and some of them are key in key positions. Every city goes through this, it's just the size of our city. We don't have a pool that's coming up through the ranks. That's just the nature of the business. You don't have enough positions in there that someone can be groomed along the way. So and again, those two key positions here are important to this city, because if Mr. Bodo just decided to walk you had now have to rely on the state of Ohio, and that is going to be extremely difficult. Just the one inspections we do here that involve the state fire marshal. He has three counties that he works in, and he's pulled thin, and it takes him an hour to get here to come up for an inspection. And just where you're at, the first week of September, they're scheduled a four day inspection up there. And I used if, if everything passes, they'll have their occupancy permit. And that's a wild card. So that's where we're at with that and that will take a load there. I mean, we've had issues over at Franciscan. They've gotten corrected, and we've been able to get the inspections done there. So again, both of these employees are willing to do that. This is something I want Council to think about. I'd have no problems if I could just get somebody hired. It doesn't work that way. I can tell you right now, for eight months, I've been down four policemen. We have not been able just hire one. That took us down to four again, we were down five. Now we're down to four, and it's been eight months. We've done everything. We've done hiring bonuses. We've done increases on the wages. This is across the nation, not just Steubenville, Ohio. It's across the board in that profession. These are things we have to deal with, but I will tell you the one thing's for sure, the specialty groups that we have, they will be cut back. Calls for service is the number one thing that any police department has to respond to when that phone call comes in and they need a policeman. We've got to have one to send out there. So this is going to, we're going to need some more discussion about this, but this is where we're at right now. So Mr. Bodo, right now is out until January, and I will ask him, I need a I want to, I want a letter from you, and we got to figure out, how are we going to proceed with this, and which is the best way to do it. Chris is a loss, without question. Many the educational level he has, the years of experience that he has. All these are factors here, so we're going to have to be creative in what we do. And again, this is a perfect time with the budget coming up to look at everything here. So that's mine."

Mr. Hernon – "Thank you. And just we don't have to discuss it tonight, but I do think there's value of a planning committee just to understand this pre; when we get to the budget, so to have that very clearly in our mind, whether it be that we could find somebody, that would be a miracle. The second is, what does that mean for training up assistants to get the credentialing or other options right that we have available to us? Like Jim mentioned, the state Consortium's off the table, it sounds like but we need to know that, and we don't have; our clock is ticking, so we'll, I'll announce that in the future, we'll wait to talk a little bit more with Jim. Thank you."

Mr. McManamon – “So I'd like to address a couple things I personally don't think we can wait. I'm not comfortable with that. I checked earlier, Mr. Bodo has eight weeks of vacation and at least 15 days at sick time. That could pretty much carry him through the rest of the year if he wanted to, not saying that's what he's going to do. The same is true with Mr. Petrossi. They both have 8 weeks of vacation. But you know, we've got the budget coming up. The budget is going to be very difficult conversations this year. It's not going to be the same as it has been in the past, because we don't have the ARPA funds. We don't have to carry over and things like that and we're tight. We're very tight right now, and we're going to be very tight come the end of this year. I don't think we should wait. I think this should be an ongoing conversation, perhaps even as often as every Tuesday night or however. You know, Costa allows us to go to executive session to discuss it. But if it was my company, I'd be looking I'd start the process tonight. It's not we don't have people lined up on fourth or Third Street knocking on the front door saying, I'd like to be the building inspector and I'd like to be there urban projects director. I think we have to be realistic about this, and I think we have to have all the options on the table, whether it be the folks down south, the state, or bringing in somebody new. I think everything has to be on the table, because I think this is a pivotal time for our city. I think we also have to look at the numbers. You know, what does our building department cost us? And I know the numbers, and it's this, it costs us a lot of money, so I think we have to look at that as well. That needs to be part of the conversation is, what does it really cost us to have our own building department in this city? And would we, would we better utilize our taxpayer funds to bring in somebody different, or to bring in the state? The work with no pay? We have our attorney sitting right here. I can't imagine. I'd ask for your input, how we can have Mr. Bodo go out at no pay as a volunteer, essentially, and be covered and be able to provide any type of service on behalf of the City of Steubenville, let alone be covered by our insurance.”

Mr. Mastros – “I think you can, but that's a fair question I need to ask. This isn't the first time this has happened before in communities, so my guess is you can, because people retire and come back and there's that 60 day gap, I'll have to check.”

Mr. McManamon – “I would appreciate that. So really because all of us know the city government doesn't move very fast, I would like to ask for job descriptions for Chris Petrossi's job and Anthony Bodo's job. And by the way, there's, I think some of us have heard there's going to be another retirement coming up pretty soon in that same department. So that's not official, but I think we have to be cognizant of that, and have to that's going to have to factor into our conversation as well. But nothing has been said on that. So I would like to ask Jim, through your network that you belong to the city manager, a job description on urban projects, Chris Petrossi, Anthony Bodo, economic development, just those three for right now. And you know, we need to begin to get the data. Okay, it's not going to get it to us tomorrow. It sometimes takes a week or two. You're going to be out for a few days anyway. So I just think we need to start the process now Mike, I don't think we can wait. I really don't. I just think we have the holidays. You know, everything kind of shuts down during that time period as well. If we have a storm, who knows what's going to happen? And who knows what's going to happen with our utilities under crown. If you know, we have another disaster like we've had the last two months. So, you know Ted, you run a school. I don't know that you'd want to wait a couple of weeks to start working on this, but I know me as a business owner, I would not want to wait time is at the essence. Thank you for letting me share that.”

Mr. Hernon – “No makes sense. We'll look at two weeks.”

Mr. Mavromatis – “I'll ask for Chris's tomorrow. I'll email him and then Mr. Bodo's we'll have to work on.”

Mayor Barilla – “Mr. Hernon on that note maybe it would be informational to the Council that you would get or find the ways to find pros and cons of using the state. What's the advantages of having a state come in and what are the disadvantages.”

Mr. Hernon – “Yeah I think there's three options. All we need to at least be do our due diligence on all options and know what the impact is financially as well as the benefits. Thank you, Mayor.”

## **Public Utilities:**

Mr. Mayo – No Report

## **Building & Grounds:**

Mr. McManamon – No Report

## **Parks & Recreation:**

Mr. Mayo – Mr. Mayo turned his time over to Lori Fetherolf.

Lori Fetherolf – Ms. Fetherolf discussed about the trash cans in the parks and wanted to purchase 64 gallon cans and get rid of the 96 gallon cans because they want to use can liners in the 64 gallons to help make it easier for their guys to collect the trash, also it'll help with the smell of the cans, and have it set out for Sanitation to pick up. She also mentioned about putting dumpsters back in some of the parks but she knows that people will end up dumping things on the sides of the dumpsters which is a problem they've run into before. They bring the trash cans to a certain area in each park to have them picked up but they are no longer coming first thing in the morning so the cans are starting to overflow and sometimes it hinders her guys to get the cans put away at the end of the day, depending on what's going on. Lori said it would cost about \$8,000 to purchase new cans for all of the parks. Lori and her staff would like to go back to the way it was prior to 2020 but didn't want to do it without Council's approval.

Mr. Mayo – Mr. Mayo disagreed with Lori because the 96 gallon trash cans are already being filled to the top and have to be emptied often and going to a smaller can would make things a lot messier because it wouldn't hold all the trash. He thinks Mr. Mavromatis needs to speak with Mr. Baird about having his guys do the parks first again and isn't sure why they would stop doing that. Mr. Mayo also believes that the bags aren't going to help the smell situation because its trash and it smells.

Ms. Hoover – Ms. Hoover agreed with Mr. Mayo and was astounded at how much it would cost to switch to the other way. She believes that the cans could be rinsed out more often and throw some kind of cleaner in there to help with the smell. She also agreed with Mr. Mayo that the park cans need to be a first priority because she's been down there later in the day and the cans are over flowing with trash and if they need too they need to stop by the parks more than 2-3 times a week.

Mr. McManamon – Mr. McManamon expressed his frustration talking about trash cans again but that he agreed with Mr. Mayo and Ms. Hoover that it was a lot of money to change the cans over and he mentioned to throw moth balls in the trash cans to help with the smell.

Mr. Mayo – Mr. Mayo asked Lori about her thoughts on the dome for the tennis courts. From what he knows tennis is a summer sport and is played outside. He wanted to know if the dome was going to accommodate the audience for these matches and who was going to run and maintain the dome. It's a multimillion dollar structure for a sport that is played outdoors. Lori mentioned that she did have some conversation with Tracy because it was brought up about the yearly problems with the cracking on the courts which she has found out from Vasco and that it is not weather related it's from what it was built on. Mr. Mayo also brought up about who was going to staff it? Who's going to pay for the electric and gas?

Mr. McManamon – Mr. McManamon mentioned that he has had multiple discussion with Franciscan about this and that the Women's tennis starts practice now and it goes until November. The teams currently have to travel to Wheeling for practice. Mr. McManamon has also had conversation with outside entities as well as being partner for this but the purpose for the ordinance is to just get numbers.

Mr. Mayo – Mr. Mayo mentioned how he remembers when the tennis courts were first built that there was an agreement with the city and the university but there was no discussion about making it an indoor facility. Franciscan knew when their seasons were and agreed on this structure. Mr. Mayo mentioned that they can't even get a splash pad in the north end but you want to spend millions on an indoor tennis court. Mr. Mayo stated that any extra money outside of any emergency projects should be spent towards getting the North End Neighborhood Grant.

Mr. Hernon – Mr. Hernon stated that Belleview Park is the crown jewel of the parks in the city and this is just the beginning of the conversation but they can't have a true conversation without some numbers. He believes this dome would be gigantic and is excited that someone is willing to partner with the city to split 50/50.

## **Transportation:**

Mr. Mayo – No Report

**Eco. Development:**

Mr. McManamon – Mr. McManamon mentioned that there will be a zoom call with Cassandra from Aspire on Monday at 9:30 a.m. and asked Jim to have the department heads there.

**Pride:**

Ms. Hoover – Ms. Hoover called for a Pride Comm. Meeting for August 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. for Chris Petrossi to discuss the Homeless Coalition.

**REPORT OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS**

Mr. Mavromatis – Mr. Mavromatis just gave a brief update on the construction in the old city building.  
Mr. Mastros – No Report.

**MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS**

Mayor Barilla – “We’ll now move onto miscellaneous reports and signing in this evening is Mr. McManamon.”  
Mr. McManamon – Mr. McManamon asked Mr. Mavromatis about an update on the water line insurance. Mr. Mavromatis said he hasn’t spoken to them in some time and will reach out to them and have an update by next week. Mr. McManamon asked about the auctions items and the ordinance that was passed on 7/16 and asked where the city stood on that. Mr. Mavromatis explained that once they get the okay on the items that the city will advertise them or if the items are less than a \$1,000.00 then anybody can purchase them. Mr. McManamon then asked about the Route 7 water station and where the city stood on that. Mr. Mavromatis explained that they were looking for a good spot to place the water station and wanted to make sure that it would not affect the salt bed. The issue they’ve been having is with these sand trucks and they’ve been trying to chase them out so that they can set up the water station in that location. Mr. McManamon said he heard something about telephone poles that are sitting on the property. Mr. Mavromatis explained that there are metal poles down there but it won’t be a problem to remove them.

Mr. McManamon made a motion to go into executive session following public forum to discuss personnel matters related to compensation and discipline of a public official. Second by Mr. Albaugh. Roll Call. All ayes. So moved motion carried declared Mayor Barilla.

Mr. Mayo – Mr. Mayo briefly spoke on a phone call he received from a constituent about the possible sale of the Grant School Lot and that they were concerned it was going to be voted on tonight. Mr. Mayo replied that he didn’t hear about anything being voted on tonight. Mr. Mayo stated that some people came in tonight to discuss that topic and there was also a petition that was going around about the sale of grant school lot.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Mayor Barilla – “We’ll move onto public forum and signing in this evening is Brodie Stutzman.”

Brodie Stutzman – Mr. Stutzman discussed how he was not in favor of a Dollar General Store possibly going on the Grant School parking lot.

Jacob Hyman – Mr. Hyman also discussed how he was not in favor of a Dollar General in that spot either.

Council Chambers were cleared for Executive Session.

Council Chambers were reopened for adjournment.

Mr. Hernon made a motion to adjourn tonight's Council Meeting. Second by Mr. Albaugh. Roll call. All ayes. So moved; meeting adjourned declared Mayor Barilla.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
CLERK OF COUNCIL

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR







