

Council Chambers
Regular Meeting
September 13, 2021
7:00 p.m.

Council met in regular session with seven of the nine members present: Phillips, Nickerson, Tatman, Lewis, Fairrow, Corcoran, and Proehl. Ms. Payne and Ms. Gillum were absent from the meeting. Also, in attendance was a visitor in the audience, in addition to Mayor Feeney, City Auditor Spetnagel, and Assistant Law Director Miller.

Ms. Nickerson moved and Ms. Corcoran seconded that Ms. Payne and Ms. Gillum be excused from this Council meeting. All members present voted “yea”, and President Arnold declared the motion adopted.

President Arnold led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mr. Phillips moved and Ms. Nickerson seconded that the minutes of the regular meeting of August 23, 2021 be accepted and approved, as submitted by the Clerk. All members present voted “yea”, and President Arnold declared the motion adopted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Affairs Committee:

Mr. Phillips stated that the Community Affairs Committee did not have anything on the agenda; however, he mentioned that his committee is in receipt of assignment #21-085, which is a request for review and possible legislation for process and procedures for handling funding requests from community organizations. He said they will be holding a committee meeting at some point after getting some data so that they can make this more streamlined and efficient for City Council and the taxpayers.

Development Committee:

Ms. Nickerson stated that the Development Committee did not have anything on the agenda tonight; and therefore, nothing to report.

Finance / Technology Committee:

Mr. Proehl stated that the Finance / Technology Committee did not have any items on the agenda, but they did meet earlier to discuss changes to a position in the Law Director’s office. He said no decision was made at that committee meeting, and they will hold an additional committee meeting next Monday, September 20th at 6:30 p.m. to discuss that topic and any additional committee assignments that come in between that time.

Parks & Recreation Committee:

Ms. Corcoran stated that the Parks & Recreation Committee had one item on the agenda, Item #5, which is the first reading of a Resolution granting use of Yoctangee Park and certain city streets for the Annual Jaycees & Evening Lions Halloween Parade on Saturday, October 30, 2021, and declaring an emergency. She said at the appropriate time she will ask to waive the three-read rule so that they will be aware that they can hold their parade as of now. She added that she would also like to congratulate Clint Boggs in the City’s Parks & Recreation Department who is the father of Baby Grant. She said she would just like to congratulate him and his family.

Engineering Committee:

Mr. Fairrow stated that the Engineering Committee did not have anything on the agenda for this evening and that there was nothing new to report.

City Services / Transit Committee:

Ms. Lewis stated that the City Services Committee had one item on the agenda, Item #3, which is the first reading of an Ordinance accepting and appropriating a \$35,000 subaward received from the Ross County Health District through the Ohio Department of Health for the implementation of

the Ross County Active Transportation Plan (AT PLAN) strategies and declaring an emergency. She said she had a committee meeting for this prior to tonight's Council meeting with no issues. She said this will go towards implementation of bike and pedestrian facilities and things along those lines. She added at the appropriate time, due to no expenditures on our end of this she will ask to waive the three-read rule. Ms. Lewis stated that she attended a Transit presentation, which was the Innovation Track final presentation that Director Powell and several of the City departments, including the Mayor, and City residents were involved with for over the past nine months, which involved a Bloomberg Harvard Innovation Grant that was received. She said it was very interesting and exciting to see all of the work that they put into that. She said she had been involved with some of the interviews and topics that they talked about and to see all of the next steps and future for the Chillicothe Transit System is really exciting.

Utilities Committee:

Mr. Tatman stated that the Utilities Committee did not have anything on the agenda tonight, but that Ms. Gillum had asked him to bring up the two items she has on tonight's agenda. Item #2, which is the first reading of an Ordinance accepting and appropriating \$16,000 in grant funds received from the Ross County Health District for the Narcan Leave Behind Program partnership with the Chillicothe Fire Department and declaring an emergency. He said he will request to waive the three-read rule at the appropriate time. Also Item #4, which is the first reading of an Ordinance providing for an agreement between the City of Chillicothe, Ohio and the Ross County Commissioners, whereby the City of Chillicothe, Ohio, will continue to be eligible through 2022 for State reimbursement of costs incurred in appointing Counsel for indigent criminal defendants and declaring an emergency. He said that this is also something that will need to be passed tonight, and at the appropriate time he will ask to waive the three-read rule.

REPORTS OF OFFICIALS

Report of Mayor Feeney:

Mayor Feeney stated that Item #2 and Item #3 are items where we are accepting and appropriating money to complete programs where we don't have a grant match. He said his request for support would be to accept and appropriate that money tonight and keep moving with good projects. He said Item #4 relates to our legal obligations and he would ask for support on that. He said that waiving the three-read rule for Item #5 would also be appropriate so that the Jaycees can be confident of their parade on October 30th.

Mayor Feeney said the standard 2021 paving program is complete with two major paving exceptions, the first is the major project that Council approved on Watt Street which is a combination of several funding sources of Community Development Block Grant, OPWC and the City paving program. He said notably that project will bring stormwater facilities to that part of town from Eastern Avenue to 7th Street for the first time. He said there is a large section of town in that area that doesn't have stormwater facilities. He said that should start in about two to three weeks and run up until through October. He said it will happen right around harvest time, which for the grain mill that could be challenging. He said we are working extra hard to communicate with the neighbors over there at the facilities and farmers to make sure that many things can happen at once without incident. He said he will be talking with both Councilwoman Gillum and Councilman Tatman to make sure that they can help with getting that information out. He said it is a big project, and timing wise this is when it had to happen, but it is exciting. Mayor Feeney said coinciding with that project they will move into the 2nd Street paving and directional changes. He said they are going to expect that somewhere around between the 14th and the 28th of October, but as we get closer and with weather it is difficult for him to say right now how it will run, but the street will probably be closed for a day or two. There will be lots of signage changes all the way from Walnut to Mulberry. He said they have been working closely with ODOT District 9 who has lots of experience and resources statewide to make sure we are getting safety information out and just preparing people. He said the reality is muscle memory when driving is a real thing, so getting people to recognize there have been some pretty significant changes at three intersections. He said we are going to be doing social media and constant communication to really make sure people are aware that it is coming.

Mayor Feeney said he would like to touch on Councilman Phillips' report on community affairs and give that some context. He said we currently help fund several organizations such as the Convention & Visitors Bureau through discretionary appropriations, also the Chillicothe Downtown LLC, which is a Main Street initiative branch, helping fund 2-1-1 right now, but he said it does seem that those requests are sort of increasing and instead of him being the soul gatekeeper

of what becomes a committee assignment or not, he thought it appropriate to offer Council the opportunity to establish some parameters for how to measure those requests, the time of year they should come in, should we be doing it at all, and what kinds of programs or projects should we consider funding. He said that way we can treat everybody with some sort of consistency. He said we have a request that has been on his desk and has compelled him to make that request for the Reentry Coalition who are already partially funded by the Ross County Commissioners. He said he went ahead and made that request to Council and thought that perhaps it could be used as a test balloon. He said he did not endorse it otherwise, he just wanted it to be before Council to consider.

Mayor Feeney said following up on Councilwoman Lewis's report of the completion of the program at Transit, he would like to thank the staff in particular. In November of last year, they selected about 10 internal staff to embark on this, and they did this on top of their regular duties. He said the staff that participated worked about 3-5 extra hours of work per week to be cross disciplinary champions of the Transit system. He said they did two tests, one of them was the trolley that they tested in downtown and the other was an on-demand test, and they are now planning on piloting both systems. He said he has always believed in the potential of our Transit System. He said we all pay income tax towards the Transit system, and it is a very unique thing for a rural community, and he said the sky is the limit with the potential. He said he also recognizes that it is not something that is seen or used by the whole community as a resource. He said one of the things that they attempted to do with the trolley system is make the connection that transit is more than what your mental image is of it now. He said to some extent he thinks the trolley did that, but he would like to continue to do that to continue to be a gateway for more and more people to use it. It would bring connectivity to downtown, connectivity to visitors, and connectivity to a really viable transit system. He said one of the biggest opportunities in transit is workforce transportation, and an on demand program could really help supplement workforce transportation. He said there are also some things in the works to try to work with our major employers and make sure they are getting people to work. He said we know there is a workforce shortage, and they realize that some of that is related to transportation. He said that there was a lot of time and energy put into it, and he just wanted to thank everybody who was involved.

Mayor Feeney said he also wanted to thank everybody who was involved in the "Sand in the Streets" event a couple of weeks ago, Downtown Chillicothe and Aubrey Herrstein. He said the level of planning and attention to detail that went into that program to bring all of that sand out of the park to have sand shipped in, the security, was really an incredible event and it doesn't happen unless there is a tone of detail in the front end. He said thank you to everybody who participated and came to watch, to volunteer and donated time and money. He said he thinks events like that really just show the potential of Chillicothe when people come together and work together and the amount of fun that was had for everybody.

Mayor Feeney concluded with masks. He said he doesn't know if everybody has seen or not that basically every health care provider had come together to sort of put together a recommendation of masks. He said he read where Pike County is 29th in the country in transmission rates. He said there probably is not a person out there that doesn't know somebody who was vaccinated who has had a breakthrough problem. He said he can't emphasize enough how important it is, and as soon as he is done he will put his mask back on. Just looking out for others right now, being careful. He thinks we got to a point this spring that felt like such a relief to be able to take off the masks and be normal again. He said he personally is having a hard time recognizing that we are back in a really bad place. He said he just wants to encourage our community members to focus on the local, focus on your neighbor, and really wear a mask and take care of each other right now. He said because he thinks if we don't we are going to head into a fall that looks a lot like last year or worse.

Report of City Auditor Spetnagel:

Auditor Spetnagel stated that she did not have anything on the agenda but that she wanted to mention that she gave a budget review prior to this meeting, and if anyone has any questions, she is available. She said she sends out financial statements at the end of every month. She said she has an amazing staff that usually closes their books within five business days, which is pretty good because with a \$52 million budget and closing the books within five days it is something to be proud of.

Report of Assistant Law Director Miller:

Assistant Law Director Miller stated that he had nothing to add or report on at tonight's meeting. He said he was present at the prior meeting and did have some discussions, but nothing further to add.

Report of President Arnold:

President Arnold said that he wanted to thank everyone in Council. He said he had asked everyone to come it with their masks on until seated at their cubicle, and he wanted to thank everyone for cooperating and said he appreciates that very much.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Lewis stated that she would like for President Arnold to assign to the appropriate committee to explore the idea of the City creating a Public Arts Committee. She said many city governments have this established and similar to our other committees would be a select group of appointed people from our community. She said it is sort of near and dear to her because she has a Fine Arts Degree from OU, and one of her class projects was to do something in your hometown. She said she had asked Mayor Planton at the time if she could paint a mural on one of the overpasses. She said for her it was kind of a touch of putting something back into the town that she was proud of. She said with the continuing revitalization of our downtown that is spreading as well as the World Heritage Designation getting closer that she thinks we need to continue to create an identity that will celebrate Chillicothe's unique, historical, cultural, and natural resources. She said she envisions the purpose of this Public Art Committee would be something to strengthen the positive reputation of the community, coordinating an artistic vision and enriching the lives of its citizens and business community and visitors throughout Chillicothe. She said it would review and recommend public art projects, make recommendations to City Council regarding appropriation funding, acquisition, maintenance, and placement of the public art. She said it could be responsible for enhancing the visibility of Chillicothe using public art to further the community's sense of spirit and pride, contributing to tourism, and ensuring public art is accessible to all individuals including those with disabilities. She ended with she would just ask President Arnold to assign to the appropriate committee the idea of the creation of a Public Arts Committee.

Mr. Proehl said he would definitely support that, and he would also like for that committee to look at, or even as a separate item, a film commission for Chillicothe. He said there is a lot of opportunity for films and especially independent films to come to Chillicothe and take advantage of the great adversity of architecture in this area. He said not only is it a financial benefit to this area if a film were to be filmed here, but it is also the pride in the community and the recognition of just how great it is to be from Chillicothe. He said they have talked about that before and there for a while some cities were even offering incentives to use their locations, and he thinks that could be a positive thing for Chillicothe.

President Arnold said he agreed with both Ms. Lewis and Mr. Proehl and that they will get an assignment together and see what we can do to work it out and get something like that rolling here in town. He said he thinks both things combined together would be fantastic.

COUNCIL ASSIGNMENTS AND CALENDAR

President Arnold announced that there would be a Finance committee meeting on Monday, September 20th at 6:30 p.m.

President Arnold announced that the next Council meeting will be Monday, September 27th at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

President Arnold announced that there are new committee assignments since the last meeting, some of which are on this meeting's agenda, for inclusion in the Journal of Council:

Safety Service: Request for legislation to accept and appropriate \$16,000 from the Ross County Health District to the Chillicothe Fire Department for Partnership in the Narcan Leave Behind Program.

Safety Service: Request for legislation for City to enter into an agreement with Ross County Commissioners for Indigent Defense.

Transit: Request for legislation to accept and appropriate \$35,000 subaward received from the Ross County Health District through the Ohio Department of Health for the Ross County Active Transport Plan strategies.

Finance: Request for legislation to update the depository agreement as required.

Safety Service: Request for legislation to appropriate \$41,000 for repairs on Fire Station 4.

Finance: Request for legislation to appropriate \$40,000 to Income Tax Refunds

Finance: Request for legislation authorizing the Tax Levies for the City of Chillicothe for FY 2021

certifying them to the County Auditor

Community Affairs: Request for review and possible legislation for process and procedures for handling funding requests for community organizations.

READING AND PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION

An Ordinance amending Ordinance #100-18 to update the Non-Bargaining Pay Ordinance and pay rate for the position of Development Director for the City of Chillicothe and declaring an emergency was read for the second time by title only.

Ord. No. 60-21 accepting and appropriating \$16,000.00 in grant funds received from the Ross County Health District for the Narcan Leave Behind Program partnership with the Chillicothe Fire Department and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Mr. Tatman moved and Mr. Proehl seconded that the three-reading rule be suspended, placing this item on final passage. All seven members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the rule suspended. All seven members present then voted “yea” on the item itself, and President Arnold declared Ordinance No. 60-21 adopted.

Ord. No. 61-21 accepting and appropriating a \$35,000.00 subaward received from the Ross County Health District through the Ohio Department of Health for the implementation of the Ross County Active Transportation Plan (AT PLAN) strategies and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Ms. Lewis moved and Mr. Phillips seconded that the three-reading rule be suspended, placing this item on final passage. All seven members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the rule suspended. All seven members present then voted “yea” on the item itself, and President Arnold declared Ordinance No. 61-21 adopted.

Ord. No. 62-21 providing for an agreement between the City of Chillicothe, Ohio and the Ross County Commissioners, whereby the City of Chillicothe, Ohio, will continue to be eligible through 2022 for State reimbursement of costs incurred in appointing Counsel for indigent criminal defendants, and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Mr. Tatman moved and Mr. Proehl seconded that the three-reading rule be suspended, placing this item on final passage. All seven members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the rule suspended. All seven members present then voted “yea” on the item itself, and President Arnold declared Ordinance No. 62-21 adopted.

Res. No. 17-21 granting use of Yoctangee Park and certain city streets for the Annual Jaycees & Evening Lions Halloween Parade on Saturday, October 30, 2021, and declaring an emergency was read for the first time by title only. Ms. Corcoran moved and Mr. Phillips seconded that the three-reading rule be suspended, placing this item on final passage. All seven members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the rule suspended. All seven members present then voted “yea” on the item itself, and President Arnold declared Resolution No. 17-21 adopted.

President Arnold inquired if there was a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Lewis moved and Ms. Nickerson seconded that the regular meeting be adjourned. All seven members present voted “yea” and President Arnold declared the motion adopted. Adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Clerk of Council

President of Council