

COUNCIL MINUTES
February 18, 2020

St. Clairsville City Council met in Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 18, 2020.

Jim Velas, Council President
Perry Basile, Council, 1st Ward
Mark Bukmir, Council, 3rd Ward
Terra Butler, Council, 4th Ward
Linda Jordan, Council-At-Large
Beth Oprisch, Council-At-Large
Frank Sabatino, Council 2nd Ward
Mike Smith, Council-At-Large

Kathryn Thalman, Mayor
Jim Zucal, Public Service/Safety Director
Cindi Henry, Finance Director
Elizabeth Glick, Law Director
Don Smithberger, Super. of General Services
Tom Murphy, Planning & Zoning Administrator

The meeting was called to order by Council President Jim Velas. President Velas led Council and attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Velas thanks everyone for coming this evening and asks the Clerk to call the roll.

ROLL CALL:

Basile Here	Oprisch Absent
Bukmir Here	Sabatino Here
Butler Here	Smith Here
Jordan Here	

MINUTES: A motion was made by Councilman Basile and seconded by Councilwoman Butler to approve the minutes of February 3, 2020.

ROLL CALL:

Basile Yes	Jordan Yes		
Bukmir Yes	Sabatino Yes		
Butler Yes	Smith Yes		
Roll Call Vote:	Six (6) Yes	Zero (0) No	Motion Approved

MINUTES: A motion was made by Councilwoman Jordan and seconded by Councilman Smith to approve the minutes of February 6, 2020, Special Meeting.

ROLL CALL:

Basile Yes	Jordan Yes		
Bukmir Yes	Sabatino Yes		
Butler Yes	Smith Yes		
Roll Call Vote:	Six (6) Yes	Zero (0) No	Motion Approved

CITIZENS HEARING: Don Lemmon (resident); Gabrielle Fillon (resident); and Larry Taylor (representative of Volunteer Energy Services Inc.).

Larry Taylor, an Energy Specialist with Volunteer Energy, introduced himself and states that he administers the gas aggregation program for the City. About ten years ago, it was put on the ballot and the community voted to make St. Clairsville the administration aggregators of the gas aggregation program, and we have been administering that for 10 years. Volunteer Energy has

about 150 gas aggregation programs in Ohio and, of those 150, there are only 12 that receive a Community Reinvestment check. Mr. Taylor attributes that benefit to Fred Holmes, who originally worked with the City to establish the program. Every Columbia Gas SCO [Standard Choice Offer] customer in the aggregation program is guaranteed to save 5% off the gas supply. It is a two-year program, and the current agreement expires at the end of March, 2021. Mr. Taylor presented the Mayor with a Community Reinvestment check in the amount of \$11,756.53 to benefit the residents of St. Clairsville. In response to a question from **Councilman Sabatino** about the residents of his ward receiving postcards on this topic, Mr. Taylor clarifies that the postcard comes from Columbia Gas, a requirement of the PUCO. However, we do send out a letter and it is an opt-in program, meaning that everyone who is a SCO customer with Columbia Gas is automatically put into the program to get that guaranteed 5% savings. Mr. Taylor states there is no cost to opt out, and they can either call and state they want to opt out or fill out the form at the bottom of that paper, send it in, and we take them off the list. **Councilman Sabatino** states he will be getting phone calls because there is confusion out there, especially amongst the elderly citizens. Mr. Taylor points out that due to the March, 2021 expiration date, there is a little bit of time before he would get calls from any residents in the program. Mr. Taylor emphasizes the 5% savings. **Councilman Basile** asks a question about the percentage of City residents who participate, and Mr. Taylor responds roughly 81% of households which is a little above average compared to their other aggregation programs.

Don Lemmon (1 Westwood Drive) congratulates the new City leaders and urges Council to work together for the betterment of the community.

Gabrielle Fillon (208 Efav Avenue) requests that the Mayor hold two town hall meetings, allowing residents to learn more about the City's water plant and the Census (including the implications of returning to Village status).

Law Director Glick states that there is a request to go into Executive Session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee or official.

Councilman Smith makes a motion to move into Executive Session under the Ohio Revised Code Section 121; **Councilwoman Butler** seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL:

Basile Yes		Jordan Yes	
Bukmir Yes		Sabatino Yes	
Butler Yes		Smith Yes	
Roll Call Vote:	Six (6) Yes	Zero (0) No	Motion Approved

At 7:54 P. M., **President Velas** states that Council will go into Executive Session.

At 8:55 P. M., Council returns to regular session following a motion by **Councilman Smith** to go out of Executive Session; **Councilman Basile** seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL:

Basile Yes	Jordan Yes
Bukmir Yes	Sabatino Yes

Butler Yes		Smith Yes	
Roll Call Vote:	Six (6) Yes	Zero (0) No	Motion Approved

REPORTS:

Public Service/Safety Director, Jim Zucal: Thanks the City employees on their work on February 6 and 7 during the recent snowfall. Mr. Zucal asks President Velas to assign a Committee -- and asks for a report -- on Codified Ordinances Chapter 351.13, the snow ban, stating it needs reviewed because of the specific work needed to remove the snow and safety concerns. Mr. Zucal states that Mr. Rockaway's valid concerns from the February 3 Council meeting have been addressed. **Councilman Sabatino** adds that he called Mr. Rockaway and he was elated that we addressed his issues so promptly. So, tell the guys thanks. **Mr. Zucal** [continues] City administrative officials will meet with the Ohio EPA legal staff to discuss the agency's Findings & Orders. The new water tank is in full production, and City workers will receive more training this Thursday. **President Velas** asks Councilwomen Butler and Oprisch, who Chair the Council's two Street Committees, to lead a review panel along with a third Council member who they can name.

Mayor, Kathryn Thalman:

We have met with Jeff Vaughn concerning an alternative study for our water situation, and it is underway. In addition, Akron-based CTI Engineers, Inc. spoke with us about creating a 50-year plan, which everyone wants including the EPA, and funding opportunities to help achieve this. We met with representatives of the FOP [Fraternal Order of Police] in advance of the negotiations which will begin on March 3. I enjoyed speaking to Rotary to discuss St. Clairsville's growth opportunities. We've discussed the City's insurance plans with Schwendeman to make sure the employees are receiving the best value for their dollars; and we are going to add an employee assistance plan for \$1.32 per employee per month for legal advice and mental health advice. We met with Terry Foster with Travelers Insurance, negotiating good prices and appropriate coverage for all of the City property. I've met with a veterans' group about the City's involvement in Memorial Day ceremonies in front of the Courthouse; I was asked to be involved, and I accepted that with honor. The Mayor introduces three guests from Martins Ferry: Mayor John Davies, Service Director Andy Sutam, and the Manager of the City's Water Plant, Bill Suto; they led them on a tour of Martins Ferry's Water Plant last Thursday afternoon and discussed opportunities with them. We've got some discussions forthcoming. Next Wednesday, we will be in Columbus to discuss timelines with the Ohio EPA, and our Law Director will be with us. We discussed grant opportunities which Gulfport will have forthcoming and which interest the City. We were in Dover all day today for a meeting with OMEGA [Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association] about grant opportunities for the City. Mayor Thalman concluded her remarks with a shoutout to Don [Smithberger] and the Police Department, which escorted salt trucks to get them out on 40 and make the roads safe on Friday, February 7th. Mayor Thalman addressed questions from **Councilman Sabatino** regarding: contract with Jeff Vaughn (Vaughn, Coast & Vaughn, Inc.); Mayor's Court training; and his offer to put in writing a public records request for monetary increases of all City employees (including their changes in salaries) from January 1, 2020 to February 18, 2020.

Police Chief, Matt Arbenz: No report. **Councilman Sabatino** thanks Matt [Chief Arbenz] for continuing that report, stating it is good communication between his department and City Council. It is much appreciated.

Planning & Zoning Administrator, Tom Murphy: A required public hearing for the rezoning and code changes before the City will be held on March 16, 2020, along with the regularly scheduled Council meeting. Mr. Murphy continues to speak before civic organizations to promote the Census and adds that the most recent estimate shows the median age of St. Clairsville residents is 50. And, a fact from the 2010 Census: St. Clairsville had a total of 631 residents (male and female) who were veterans of the armed forces.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance, Chair Mike Smith: No report since our Finance Director has been under the weather, and there was no meeting tonight.

Utilities, Chair Beth Oprisch: President Velas states the meeting will be next week, and the Chair is out of town.

Police, Chair Mark Bukmir: No report, but Chief Arbenz wants to hold a meeting following Council tonight.

Streets-North, Chair Terra Butler: No report.

Streets-South, Chair Beth Oprisch: Not in attendance.

Safety, Chair Terra Butler: Chair Butler mentions the safety meeting on Thursday morning.

Building & Grounds, Chair Perry Basile: Chair Basile states he received a couple quotes on the bathroom partitions, and he is been looking at replacement floor tiles. He inquires of Law Director Glick about doing the work within the City. **Law Director Glick** has nothing to report. **Mr. Zucal** adds that he spoke with the building authority and, as long as the plans are approved, there can be in-kind labor. **Chair Basile** states that he plans to hold a meeting of the committee before the next Council meeting. **President Velas** mentions he has been seeking information from Mr. [Jim] Behl on making the meetings more accessible to people with disabilities, and asks Chair Basile to get with him. **Chair Basile** adds that he was planning to discuss that at a later date after getting additional information.

Planning Commission, Chair Frank Sabatino: No report.

Fire District, Chair Frank Sabatino: No report.

Recreation, Chair Linda Jordan: No report. Thanks Finance Director Cindi Henry for her many years of sharing her expertise. She also noted that for 20 years Cindi was contracted by the State of Ohio to train new clerks for cities, villages, townships, and fire districts.

Park District, Chair Linda Jordan: No report.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS:

Law Director, Elizabeth Glick: The resolution on the agenda tonight for a first reading will be brought up at the March 2 meeting. No reports.

CORRESPONDANCE:

Mayor Thalman reads a letter from Gene Kieffer, praising Sean Hanley and Debbie Reed [Parks & Recreation Department] for their efforts during the Pickleball season, and thanking the City for recognizing the value of the sport.

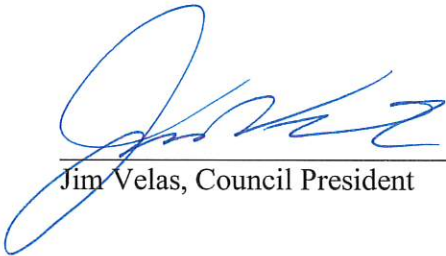
The next regular meeting of City Council will be on March 2, 2020 at 7:30 P. M.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilman Smith makes a motion to adjourn; a second is offered by **Councilwoman Butler**.



Roberta Mertz, Council Clerk



Jim Velas, Council President