

ST. CLAIRSVILLE CITY COUNCIL

April 20, 2020 Meeting

[Teleconference format in compliance with temporary changes to Ohio's Open Meetings Act]

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
Open, Public Service/Safety Director
Annette Williams, 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 in the Pledge of Allegiance and thanked everyone from the public who have joined in on the teleconference call. President Velas asked the Clerk to call the roll.

ROLL CALL:

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Basile Here | Oprisch Here |
| Bukmir Here | Sabatino Here |
| Butler Here | Smith Here |
| Jordan Here | |

MINUTES:

President Velas It's not on the agenda that way, but we are going to approve the minutes before we go to the Mayor's update on the EPA findings. Everybody should have been mailed out copies of the minutes from both the March 30th and the April 6 meeting minutes. President Velas asked members in turn if they got a copy of the minutes, and then asked if they had any questions on the March 30th minutes.

Councilman Sabatino, Councilman Bukmir, Councilwoman Butler, Councilman Basile, Councilwoman Oprisch, Councilman Smith, and Councilwoman Jordan All responded that they received the minutes.

Councilman Sabatino, Councilman Bukmir, Councilwoman Butler, Councilman Basile, Councilwoman Oprisch, Councilman Smith, and Councilwoman Jordan No questions.

President Velas Do we have a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of March 30, 2020? **Councilman Sabatino** offers a motion to approve the minutes, and **Councilman Smith** offers a second.

ROLL CALL:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Basile Yes | Oprisch Yes |
| Bukmir Yes | Sabatino Yes |
| Butler Yes | Smith Yes |
| Jordan Yes | |
| Roll Call Vote: | Seven (7) Yes Zero (0) No Motion Approved |

President Velas We have a 7 - 0 vote to approve the minutes of March 30th. We'll now move to the minutes of the April 6th meeting. President Velas asked members in turn if they received a copy and if they had any questions on the April 6 minutes?

Councilman Sabatino, Councilman Bukmir, Councilwoman Butler, Councilman Basile, Councilwoman Oprisch, Councilman Smith, and Councilwoman Jordan All responded that they received the minutes, and no Council member had questions.

President Velas states that he will entertain a motion to approve the minutes. **Councilwoman Jordan** made the motion to approve the April 6 minutes, and **Councilman Smith** seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:

Basile Yes

Oprisch Yes

Bukmir Yes

Sabatino Yes

Butler Yes

Smith Yes

Jordan Yes

Roll Call Vote: Seven (7) Yes Zero (0) No Motion Approved

President Velas We have 7 - 0 vote on the April 6 minutes, and those minutes have been approved. **President Velas** states that the Mayor next will update Council on the Ohio EPA's Findings and Orders.

MAYOR UPDATE:

Mayor Thalman Thank you, Jim. First, thank you to Jim Behl, Jody Williams and Jim Velas for making this teleconference possible. And, Mr. Velas, thank you for allowing me to speak first prior to Mr. Vaughn's report. The things I wanted to say are important and I think they needed to be said first. There are three important points that need to be articulated.

Number 1: The Final Findings and Orders came out; we got them last week. St. Clairsville had proposed a 5-year plan to connect to alternative water sources. The EPA said no, you have 2 years. And, I quote in the Findings and Orders "Within 60 days of the effective date of these orders, the respondent shall demonstrate to the Ohio EPA's satisfaction that there is a sustainable and reliable alternative source of drinking water and that is available from an approved public water system to adequately supply daily usage for emergency situations including long term shortages."

Number 2: The EPA Final Findings and Orders, which the City received, states that, and I quote, "Order 3, Section B, Part 2, Within 24 months of the effective date of these orders, the respondent shall permanently connect to an approved public water supply by first submitting written documentation to the EPA for approval within six (6) months of the effective date of the orders." So, what that says is, when the EPA signs off on this which I have signed, the clock starts ticking. The water plant and the reservoir are to be abandoned and retired in 2 years. And again, this is from the date of the signed EPA orders by their attorney.

Prior to Mr. Vaughn's report, I would like to provide Council with information that needs to be considered as our City moves forward in finding our solution for safe, drinkable water. First of all, the EPA Progress Report: We have strengthened our water system. Regardless of the direction we decide to take – to sell or maintain – the City has done a remarkable job. Jeff Vaughn, Donny [Smithberger], Jody [Williams], everyone who has worked to put this together has done wonderfully. But, we have two very large tasks that are running parallel to each other.

The first is that we fix our water plant and reservoir in order to meet EPA standards which will allow the City to continue providing safe, drinkable water to our residents until our long-term plan is executed. And, you can look at the Progress Report on what we have accomplished, as a team, in three short months – Donny, again, Jeff, all admin staff, thank you.

Then, there was the Water Option Report that we had asked Mr. Vaughn to put together. And the turnaround time for this report was very short due to the Aqua deadline. Jeff has done an outstanding job pulling this together for us in 60 days. Typically, a report with this amount of in-depth information would require at least 18 months. Thank you, Jeff for your patience, your knowledge and your hard work.

But what this means, Number 2, my second point is, that the current, proposed Aqua contract that is on the table is no longer applicable. The conditions and the Findings and Orders have changed the contract proposals. Changes would have to be made to capital expenditures, and in the contract there is \$4.5 million dollars allocated in the contract for the Water Plant. That is no longer valid. And, Jody, I am going to ask you, is Ms. Bojko on the phone?

Ms. Bojko Yes. I have joined. Thank you.

Mayor Thalman Hi Kim. This is Ms. Kim Bojko, one of the attorneys with Carpenter Lipps who helped to execute the contract for the City with Aqua. And, if you would not mind giving them a quick opinion, I would appreciate it.

Attorney Bojko Great. Thanks for having me back. I recall meeting with the City Council in, I believe, it was in September of last year. And, after just to kind of give you an update of what's happened after we met in September, we began negotiating again with a couple provisions at your request with Aqua. And, if you recall, the sale of the system cannot be sold until there's PUCO [Public Utilities Commission of Ohio] approval. So we were concerned of a time period between the Aqua purchase and the actual closing date when the transfer would occur and what would happen with the EPA orders. So, in late October, we were negotiating with EPA and then also Aqua and we negotiated additional proposed amendments. And, I'm not sure if you all recall or not but what it did was, before the closing, Aqua would have to agree that, if there was capital expenditure required by the EPA orders at or in excess of \$250,000 that the City had not planned to already do and allocate funds to, then we would have to renegotiate the purchase price of the contract. And, if we couldn't do that, either party could walk away after 30 days. So, we did get agreement on that provision. And, the significance of that provision is that now we are in the position where the EPA has actually issued the orders and, as was just explained by the Mayor, the orders require certain improvements to be made that either the City has already made or is in the process of making or must make within a certain time period in the order. So, what

that says, as the Mayor just described, it's going to have to inevitably modify the Aqua purchase agreement. And I just wrote down two examples for you so you would understand where we are coming from: for one, if the City does the sediment removal and cleans out the reservoir under Section 3(d) of the EPA order then that obviously changes your deal and it should increase the purchase price because you've expended funds and you have improved the system. So, you would want to renegotiate the purchase price as we did before when we were talking about the water tank improvement and other items. So, you would want to attempt to renegotiate some terms, either the purchase price or we got some employment benefits, if you recall, employee benefits and other provisions in the agreement because of some of the improvements the City had made. So, you would similarly want to do that.

Secondly, the provision I just read to you, the proposed amendment about the capital expenditure, there's still a period of time where the PUCO is going to have to approve this. So, if you have to fulfill the EPA order and make more of these improvements, then you would want to reconsider this paragraph that said at or in excess of \$250,000, and you may now want to try to make that provision \$100,000 or \$200,000 because now the economics have changed. Another example would be if you do the second provision which the Mayor just described to you which is to find an alternative source of drinking water and not use the reservoirs and actually take your supply from somebody else. Then, as the purchaser, why would Aqua want to purchase assets that no longer are viable or no longer will be used in the production and distribution of the water system? So, if I look at the contract and the last updated contract has from 9/29/19, and you can look at Section 1.1 is an asset provision and then there is an asset list attached to the contract, Schedule 1.1. So, that asset schedule would need to be revised obviously to correspond with the assets that you're actually transferring and would be used. If I was Aqua and the purchase price should be, you know, significantly reduced by the assets that you are or are not transferring to them. So, that's an example of another one.

The third example that I had here which is what the Mayor just mentioned was that I would think that the fees that were based on both your, remember we based electric rates as well as water rates and other fees were based on the system as it was going to be sold last year and it is also based on the cap x, the ten year, capital improvement expenditure sheet that Aqua was relying upon. So, if that capital expenditure sheet needs to be changed, you would want to make sure that Aqua has in place a program to appropriately spend the residents' money. And, that's what they had done with their cap x ten-year program but that would have to, I would want that to, be revised as well. So, the basic point is as the Mayor just stated is the EPA orders have, I think, changed the economics of the deal or the economics of the deal should be changed. And, I don't believe that this has been discussed with Aqua but that's one thing you'd want to do is discuss with Aqua the economics of the entire deal. We'd have to revise the contract to make it correspond with the reality and the EPA orders now that already exist.

Mayor Thalman Thank you, Kim, so very much. And, yes, we have notified Aqua that, you know, the contract is not valid due to the Findings and Orders. They are aware of that. We have not set down to renegotiate, but this, as you know, I just spoke with you on Saturday, this has been breaking like by the minute. So, I do appreciate that. Thank you very much.

Attorney Bojko Absolutely. Happy to take any questions as well.

Mayor Thalman OK. Does anyone have any questions for Ms. Bojko?

President Velas OK. Mayor, we'll start down in order so we don't have people talking over each other. I think basically what we are looking at is for a contract that would be beneficial to both of us. It would probably have to be renegotiated and not the current contract that has been considered. So, we'll start down here with Frank [Sabatino] at this point. Frank, do you have any questions you'd like to ask Ms. Bojko?

Councilman Sabatino No. I just had an observation listening to Kim [Bojko]. Thank you for speaking, Kim, and being up front with us. It sounds like it would, the contract as it was back in September, would need a complete overhaul if the City would decide to go with Aqua. Am I hearing that correctly?

Attorney Bojko I don't know about a complete overhaul. The language and the terms wouldn't change. It would be the economics surrounding the deal, so the purchase price, some of the value items such as we negotiated employee benefits, employee retention to run the facilities, if you are not going to use the facilities in the same manner. I'm not sure if that would be necessary probably at least for the one-year transition period. But, things of that nature that have value would likely need to be negotiated. We wouldn't have to start from scratch but definitely there would be a few provisions that need to be updated.

Councilman Sabatino That's all I have. Thank you, Kim.

Councilman Bukmir Yes. I do have a question. Ms. Bojko, if we would choose to renegotiate this contract, what would the time frame be, and would it fit into the EPA window to give us time to make a decision, read the contract over, either approve it or not approve it?

Attorney Bojko I guess if you are talking about the deadline that Aqua has provided of May 4th, that's in two weeks. I think that might be a bit aggressive. I haven't spoken to Aqua, so I am not sure what they have scheduled. I don't think that it is a monumental task that couldn't be negotiated in a couple of days, even a couple of weeks. But, I mean, it's just the time of what they have scheduled and the meetings that you need and then approval from you all. I think a couple of weeks, just because knowing the normal process through City Council and going through public offices, two weeks might be aggressive. But, of course, it can be done. Attorneys often negotiate these contracts and provisions on very quick timelines, so I don't think that's the problem. It's just the two-week process might be difficult with regard to all the public process that you have to go through to vote on it. As well as, I don't know what Aqua's schedule is, to be honest.

Councilman Bukmir OK. Thank you, ma'am.

Councilwoman Butler and Councilman Basile No questions.

Councilwoman Oprisch Kim, thanks for coming. I don't have any questions at this time.

Councilman Smith I don't have any questions right now, but that's something to digest and

think about. So, I don't have any questions right now.

Councilwoman Jordan No questions.

President Velas I will just ask one question here just for general knowledge. Ms. Bojko, I assume no one is even at this point discussed with Aqua whether they would be even willing to renegotiate?

Mayor Thalman I will intervene, Jim. We talked to them today and alerted them to this because again this all broke pretty late and they were very gracious about it but we have not talked to them yet. I wanted to see, you know, get through our meeting tonight and then based on what Ms. Bojko said talk to Aqua and see what their commitment would be to doing this. So, no, we have not talked about renegotiating the time line.

President Velas OK.

Councilwoman Oprisch Jim, this is Beth, can I ask a question now? Sorry about that...

President Velas Sure.

Councilwoman Oprisch I wonder, Kim, if the decision is to proceed with the sale, could we not then look at the contract at that point?

Attorney Bojko I'm sorry. You must have broken up. If the question is, if you proceed with the sale, could you look at the contract then?

Councilwoman Oprisch Well, I guess because of this two-week time line, the vote has to be in two weeks to meet the Aqua deadline. There's no reason to look at the contract any further if the decision is not to sell. But, if the decision is in two weeks to sell, could we change the ordinance or the resolution at that point to say pending on the successful contract negotiation? So, that gives us some time to look at the negotiations if the decision is to sell.

Attorney Bojko I mean, of course, you can do whatever you want as long as Aqua agrees with you. It was my understanding that Aqua wanted an executed contract by May 4th. If they agree to extend that to have approval by May 4th and then to enter into contract negotiations, that is fine, I think. I have not talked to Aqua about renegotiating it because as I think the Mayor just laid out, I think she wanted to get some guidance from you all today before engaging in that next step which would cause money and resources to be spent. I think that's why we are here today talking to you about it. But, I think if Aqua agrees to extend the execution of the contract date, sure, of course, you can do that anytime.

Mayor Thalman Beth, it's Kathryn. When you say to execute an ordinance to sell, maybe to consider selling, because we want to know exactly what the contract says before you commit to sell, right?

Councilwoman Oprisch Right.

Attorney Bojko I mean, that's obviously...

[Unintelligible] Chicken and the egg problem.

Councilwoman Oprisch I'm just suggesting, to underscore Kim's point, that there is no reason to invest time and money if the Council decision would be not to pursue with the sale. And, we won't know that for two weeks. So, that's what I am saying. But, I mean, we need to know what we are agreeing to but I feel like to meet that deadline if in two weeks the decision of Council is to move forward with the sale, then, if we could then talk about the contract expedited I can appreciate, but I'm just trying to save time and resources if the decision is to [unintelligible].

Mayor Thalman Good point.

President Velas OK.

Law Director Glick Beth, this is Elizabeth. I have a matter that you should consider. When you were voting on this contract last year, you had three readings but there wasn't enough people to vote for it, so it was tabled. And, it was based on the contract that you had negotiated at that time. So, you would have to actually, if you are going to renegotiate parts of this contract, you would need to go through the whole resolution process or the ordinance process all over again. So, I mean, it could be on May 4th; you could do an emergency, but you'd have to follow all those rules and do your three readings at one meeting.

President Velas Beth, does that answer your question?

Law Director Glick You would be no longer be voting on the contract that you were voting on back in November and October.

President Velas So, basically, Elizabeth, that would require three readings unless it was emergency legislation.

Law Director Glick Right.

President Velas OK. Beth, does that answer your question?

Councilwoman Oprisch Yes. And, Elizabeth, remind me how many votes are required for an emergency. Is it six?

Law Director Glick You need five.

Councilwoman Oprisch Five. OK. Thanks.

President Velas Do you have any other questions for Kim, Beth? Or for Elizabeth?

Mayor Thalman Kim, thank you very much. This is Kathryn. Thank you so much. We so

appreciate your participating.

President Velas If there are no further questions for Ms. Bojko, I'd like to thank her also for being on here tonight and trying to assist us in making this decision and discussing all the pertinent information that Council will have to look at before a decision one way or another is reached. And, I again thank you for your time and effort.

Attorney Bojko My pleasure. And, I will excuse myself then. Thank you so much. Good luck.

Mayor Thalman Thank you very much.

President Velas Thank you very much.

Mayor Thalman Thank you. And, Jim, this is Kathryn. If I could finish this then we'll turn it over. And, the third point that will change the contract is, that the money allocated in the contract by Aqua for \$500,000 to match the Bellview project is no longer a valid clause. And, here's the update on the Bellview project...the past Administration had hired Diversified Engineering from New Philly to study the Bellview flooding situation and to provide the blueprints and construction cost estimates. This was completed for a cost to the City of approximately \$100,000. The estimated cost for this project is \$1.6 million dollars. St. Clairsville applied for and was awarded \$800,000 as a 0% loan from the Ohio Public Works Commission. But the past Administration did not consummate signing the documents nor was there a schedule submitted. The monies were only available on paper. No match monies were identified from any funding agencies. And Aqua, as part of the current contract, states that they will provide matched money of up to \$500,000. On April 14, the Ohio Public Works Commission sent a notice that due to the COVID-19 virus, any secured funding would need to be spent by July 1st of 2020. Therefore, the Bellview project is placed on hold until a path forward can be determined. It certainly needs to be a priority. The scope of the flooding issue will be discussed with the effected residents and studied from all perspectives.

Then, lastly, I want to mention the fact that again kudos to Jeff, Donny and the Administrative team because we had 17 orders and findings that we were given from the EPA that were absolutely emergent. Our feet were put in the fire immediately. Out of these 17 items, and I don't think I need to read them all because I think the meeting is going to be long enough, about 80% of these are completed. And, from what I understand today, Donny you have already installed two of the meters that were ordered to use to meter the water. I am really proud of the team that works for this City. And, again, you all will receive that copy of that Orders and Findings update so you can see how each and every single item has been addressed. And, so many of them are finished. And, again, I can't say enough good things about this team. So, I thank you, Jim, for letting me speak first. I thought those things should proceed Jeff's report. And, I'll turn it back over to you.

President Velas Thank you, Mayor. OK. If no one has any further questions, we'll move on to the presentation of Mr. Vaughn's report on the possibility of the City addressing the water issues.

Jeff Vaughn Thank you, Jim.

President Velas Mr. Vaughn, you have the floor sir.

HEARING:

Jeff Vaughn, P.E., Vaughn, Coast & Vaughn, Inc., presentation titled *City of St. Clairsville: A Report on Maintaining Public Ownership of Water & Wastewater Utilities and the Effect on User Rates*. [Document attached as part of the official record.]

Jeff Vaughn, President Velas and administrative staff Discussion about Wayne Cannon's (RCAP) access to the teleconference call so that he can contribute to the discussion.

Wayne Cannon, Economist with the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP), enters the call as a participant and, at Jeff Vaughn's invitation, he adds additional information to the forecast portion of the presentation on the Vaughn report. When you look at "Affordability" rates, the various funding agencies usually consider affordability under 1.5% medium household income as being the threshold at where grant and low interest loan eligibility begin. So your rates are significantly below the threshold where it is going to be easy to get any grant dollars. There is the potential for grant funding for regionalization which is exactly what you are doing. But, when it comes to affordability, there's really not going to be any grant funding available for any of these projects. The supporting documentation is all available for everyone's review. The intent is to be very transparent. We took four years of history and used that to come up with a typical year, and then made adjustments on the water side to take out the assumed cost of abandoning the treatment plant to come up with a revised typical year. That typical year was then projected forward and the assumptions that were made on the forecasting side to come up with the budget that Jeff went into great detail on the rates about. Your community uses a lot less water than the old standard of 4,500 gallons. That's kind of typical with a lot of communities today. The agencies have adjusted their funding mechanisms to kind of adapt to that. With that said, what we calculated as affordability is based upon actual average residential use for both water and sewer. So, that should be fairly representative of a typical residence of the City. I put the 4,500 gallons there on the page just to do the calculations because that's the old way it used to be calculated. But quite honestly, the average resident does not use that much. It is going to all the new plumbing fixtures. Everybody who puts in new plumbing, it uses less water than the old system: old top loader washer used to use about 40 gallons and a lot of these newer front loaders are only 14-15 gallons; and toilets, shower heads, everything uses much less water. When you are in the business of selling water, conservation isn't necessarily good, particularly when you've got a lot of product to sell. But with that said, that's just kind of what's going on.

One of the big underlying trends that I see is you've got a lot of water loss. I think you really need to do, regardless of which way you go, you need to do whatever you can to tighten up the system to reduce water loss. I kind of assumed about a 2 ½ % reduction of water loss going from about 42% to down to about 20% over the 10-year period. Quite honestly, 20% is still too high. You really should be less than 15 in an urban setting such as what you've got, but it is a slow general decline. When you are purchasing water, leaks become very, very expensive. And, that's the reason why when Jeff and I talked about this we put a great deal of emphasis on trying

to work down water loss so that you wouldn't have that expense to bear throughout the ongoing future years.

Jeff Vaughn And, one of the things that I discovered in this analysis was, we always talked about using 600,000 gallons a day that was pumped through the system and then you billed a certain amount and you had this hypothetical 48% loss. Well, as we got into the numbers, what I discovered was through the operators that for a period of three years the meters were dysfunctional on the amount of water being pumped to the actual system. They were estimating the best they could. The new meters began to give us data on really what was being accurately pumped using magnetic meters (mag meters, we call them) in the first quarter of this year. So, the only numbers I could see on what we pumped this year, they were much lower than 600,000 gallons per day because they were actual real numbers and not three years of estimates based on nonfunctional water plant meters.

Wayne Cannon And, I've made adjustments in that regard to look at the most current available information and then comparing that to data that was available two years ago when you did have functioning meters. I kind of disregarded those estimates because they weren't meaningful. So, we made a lot of assumptions in those regards, I think very realistic goals for the community should you decide to move forward on your own with an asset management type of procedure identifying on the water side, water loss, and on the wastewater side, I&I issues. Which you've got quite a bit of I&I on the sewer side as well. And, as you are able to wrap your arms around some of those things, you will see benefit to being able to accomplish that economic benefit. I felt fairly good about the analysis when we were done from the standpoint that everything kind of fit into place and made sense. We still don't know exactly the type of projects or exactly where all the projects will be, but I think Jeff has put together a very good format to be able to identify the need and be able to address that in a reasonable amount of money. Looking at the analysis, looking at the rates, does anyone have questions from me?

President Velas explains the guidelines provided to Council in advance for the Question and Answer period. Round #1 of Council members' questions of Mr. Vaughn or Mr. Cannon, beginning with President Velas asking each member in turn if they have any questions:

Councilman Sabatino Yea. I've got a couple questions and some observations.

President Velas You are breaking up.

Councilman Sabatino OK. Can you hear me? Hello. OK. Just a few things, Jeff, from a construction point of view, you and Wayne, I hear a lot of ifs, and to me in construction, that translates to change of work orders and there still seems to be a lot of variables, you know, providing we keep it, you know, intangibles and oh by the ways. And, in construction terms on a construction project this would be massive, it all would add up in dollars and cents and actually thousands of dollars and into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Do you find that statement rather correct?

Jeff Vaughn Doing this report, I think you realize that I have not been doing this for five years. There is an experience factor here which allows me to have some judgment in terms of providing

cost and seeing how they would be realized and what we are portraying as future projects from that standpoint. I've been doing projects for probably 40 years about and understand very well utility projects. There are many unknowns and nobody, I don't care who they are, can tell you that there's not going to be change orders and surprises because working in old communities I've done a lot of water replacement projects and there's many unforeseens. So, you just have to be ready, you have contingency budget for change orders, and you prepare to receive them. If you do your work upfront as best you can, you will have allowances for that, you budget for that, and you will have pay items that will adequately give a fair ability for a contractor to do that business in that community. But, I've done a lot of projects with utility replacement and this is what you are going to have. You're going to have surprises, there are no definites up front for anybody.

Wayne Cannon Can I add a couple of...

Councilman Sabatino Sure. Go ahead, Wayne.

Wayne Cannon Pretty much what you need to realize is that you've got excessive I&I and you've got excessive water loss. At this point, the studies necessary to identify the cause of those problems haven't yet been completed. And, it doesn't matter who's doing that, whether it is Jeff or whether it's Aqua Ohio, those studies have not yet been completed. All you can kind of do is budget to do the studies and then put some rough estimates for the renovation costs to make necessary corrections. The corrections on both water and sewer focus on distribution and collection. The focus is on solving real problems once those real problems are identified.

Councilman Sabatino OK. I understand that. All right. And, uh, Jeff, my other question is, and the [Belmont] County will not be able to supply us until year 5 and the reservoir in two years according to the EPA will be shut down. What do we do in year 3, 4 and 5?

Jeff Vaughn Well, if you listen to what I was reporting on, it dealt with the reason to put the East End Booster Station in progress within the two year time frame and that's what we negotiated with the Ohio EPA so that we could demonstrate. We shut the water plant down in year 3 and that booster station is there to provide the backup for the other one that's been over at the water plant since 2005. I know the dates are kind of confusing, and I went over a lot there, we had to demonstrate 100% in year 3. So it is there, Frank, it is from the County.

Councilman Sabatino OK. And, unfortunately, I'm assuming the other Council people did not get it until late afternoon yesterday and I wish I'd had more time to study it. And, you know, my last observation is, usually on projects like this I would feel comfortable going in to a Dennis Bigler or Jim Zucal and sitting in their office and going over this entire report but due to the undignified manner when Jim Zucal was dumped from this administration, you know, I no longer have that person to talk to.

President Velas Frank, I don't think we need to go there.

Councilman Sabatino But, I just have to take your word for it, Jeff. And, you know, is your \$25,000 study, is it over, Jeff?

Jeff Vaughn No, I have to summarize some other things for the City. But, if you have any questions that require any more information, I'm always open to have you call me, visit with me, and I can go over in depth a lot of the aspects of what went into preparing this and the background information. I'd be happy to do that anytime.

Councilman Sabatino Yea, well, like I said, it was a lot to absorb there and I just didn't get it until yesterday afternoon for unknown reasons. And, you know, I read it once, read it twice and you know, waiting for your presentation. And, you covered it verbatim. So, that's all the questions I had.

Councilman Bukmir Very nice report, Mr. Vaughn, thank you for your work. I guess we can slice it and dice it however we want to, but I am asking you, what is your conclusion -- would it be more beneficial to go with Belmont County water or would it be more beneficial to the City to go with Aqua and their expertise?

Jeff Vaughn Mark, I think you've missed some of the point here. Going with water is not the choice. That was an EPA directive on getting rid of the water plant; that was what we were addressing in the first quarter. What I was addressing tonight was simply if you maintain ownership, how do you do that using public financing versus a private company doing the same things I'm talking about but with private money. The decision to buy the bulk water is a foregone conclusion and that was done already. So, the water purchase is a separate issue and I was trying to make that pretty clear. You know, it has nothing to do with the City of St. Clairsville and the future ownership or Aqua Ohio ownership, that decision has been made.

Councilman Bukmir I guess I should have rephrased the question. At this point, would it still be an option to try to renegotiate a contract with Aqua with the changes that have occurred since the last negotiation?

Jeff Vaughn And, that was addressed at the beginning of your meeting tonight if I didn't understand your question. That's a whole question for the group and Aqua, I think. It is out of my responsibility in this study.

Councilman Bukmir OK. Say, if we would go the Belmont County route, do we have the manpower to be able to do these things that need to be done or would that have to be hired out?

Jeff Vaughn The City has to do like I mentioned, if you maintain ownership, you have an experienced operating staff, you have to manage the future and decide what you can do in house, what you hire out with a contractor through bid projects, or what we call point repairs on the spot which is what all the communities have always done. They have to figure that out on a forward basis, managing their water department funds and their sewer department funds, with the direction of some public works type director person. That's typically the responsibility and what the main emphasis of a lot of public works person in those positions does is water and wastewater management. And, just what you've mentioned, and that's case by case basis on how best to implement a change, a correction with that utility.

Councilman Bukmir OK. Mr. Cannon, are you still on the line?

Wayne Cannon Yes. Yes, I am.

Councilman Bukmir The recap, those are loans, those are not grants, correct? And we probably wouldn't be able to qualify for any type of grant even regionalization, if I am hearing that correctly?

Wayne Cannon On the East End Booster Station, you could probably qualify for some money under regionalization. Everything else is fixing internal problems, and those internal problems would most likely not qualify for grants because of your high medium household income. To go back and kind of answer a little bit more on your question to Jeff. I assume that all of the existing personnel would continue to operate at St. Clairsville. Right now, their duties are dictated toward that treatment plant. In the future, they would have to be cross trained and to basically be distribution specialists that would help find some of the leaks, help fix some of the leaks. You know, it is going to be a change of roles for people, but the same number of people would still be there.

Councilman Bukmir OK. I guess my final question would be what is the fee that RCAP is charging for this -- and I don't see it worked into any of these equations?

Wayne Cannon I'm not charging anything. My services are being provided from EPA grants because they asked us to be involved and helping Belmont County with various regionalization projects. And I'm just providing my service on a pro gratis basis. I don't have any skin in the game.

Councilman Bukmir Thank you very much. I appreciate it. I have no further questions.

Councilwoman Butler No questions. Thank you.

Councilman Basile I do. I have just a couple questions. When it comes to bringing these projects on, I do know that the people that we have currently on staff have done a lot of the repairs. They had put the water line in up on Oak Street by my house; they did that project a few years ago. So, I don't want to underestimate the quality and the ability of the people that we do have, and I know there will be some cross training and some things that they have to learn to do, but there's a good part of what we do here that our sewer and water guys already do do. They do the repairs on a daily basis when we have water leaks and sewer leaks. And, I do know that we did lose quite a bit of personnel within the Sewer, Water and Street Departments over the last few years. I'm sure we all realize that this was a deliberate degradation of our workforce to make it more advantageous to sell. We all know that already.

President Velas Perry, do you have a specific question?

Councilman Basile But, I think over time we will be bringing more people back into the fold as we need. That's really all I wanted to say. And, also, I know that this whole value engineering thing about the Overbaugh area, is that a project that can be done starting here in the summer?

Jeff Vaughn Yes, Perry, we would want to do that immediately just to take the drawings, look at it and see what we can do when we are looking at those three homes with that immediate, what I call, a health and safety issue to be resolved and plan for that because you've got to do something.

Councilman Basile Yea, I realize that's a EPA major issue, sanitary, and those folks really need some remedy. It's been going on too long. All right, thank you, that's all I had.

Wayne Cannon One additional comment as far as personnel costs, if you look at the typical year, there's a note section that shows how I came up with that typical year, I did not assume that 2019 was typical. I took a four year average (2016 – 2019), so I captured some of that pre run off cost in my typical year that got projected forward.

Councilman Basile OK. I see it. Thank you.

Councilwoman Oprisch Yes. I have no specific questions regarding the report at this time. I'd like to take some more time to digest it. I appreciate the presentation but again just a little more time to digest it. I do know that I'm welcome to ask any questions as any Council person would be as they continue. We have two weeks to digest this report before we have to make a vote, so we have ample time to read this report and to follow up with questions. And, I know that Jeff would be open to that. I'd like to make two comments then so I reserve that I might ask questions as I digest this further but just not at the moment. I want to thank Jeff and Wayne for their professionalism, diligence, the time and expertise for this report. I'm not looking at this report and taking Jeff's word for it. I'm counting on his experience, his expertise. And, quite frankly, I'm losing patience with Mr. Sabatino's snarky

President Velas OK. I don't think that is going to get us anywhere either for either Frank or

Councilwoman Oprisch No, I'm going to make this comment that the lack of professionalism needs to stop. I'll stop now.

Councilman Sabatino Mr. Velas, I want to interject. I object to Ms. Oprisch once again, it's all right

President Velas Wait a minute, excuse me, we're getting too many people talking at once here. First of all, Beth [Oprisch] are you done?

Councilwoman Oprisch I am.

President Velas OK. You have no other comments, you are completely done, I mean, with that comment?

Councilwoman Oprisch Yes.

Councilman Sabatino Jim, I want to reply to Ms. Oprisch. You know, she thinks that she's the only one that can express her opinion and anyone else she comes down on. You know, I really object to her. You know, you know,

President Velas OK. OK.

Councilman Sabatino All that she's said and done in the last two years, you know, no one's said anything. But, boy you say something, and she jumps on you.

President Velas OK. I think, at this time, what we are supposed to be doing

Councilman Sabatino I'm sick and tired of her.

President Velas I think what we are supposed to be discussing, Frank, at this time,

Councilman Basile I'm sick and tired of you, Frank.

President Velas time, and Elizabeth, not Elizabeth, I'm sorry, Beth, we're supposed to be discussing the water and the sewage issues. And right now, we are into personality disputes, right now, is not going to accomplish anything. So, we will

Councilwoman Oprisch Mr. Velas, I'd ask you to do your job. When Mr. Sabatino makes underhanded comments that you shut him down when he first starts.

President Velas When he makes pointed comments directed at somebody

Councilman Basile I agree.

President Velas I think that will be taken care of. But, at this point,

Councilwoman Oprisch He did.

President Velas At this point,

Councilwoman Oprisch Mr. Velas, he did. And, that's why I'm responding.

President Velas OK. Well, at this point in time, like I say, this is a question and answer period strictly for the water issue, not to voice opinions of the way things transpired in the past. And, that technically goes for all Council people and for myself also. So, at this point

Councilwoman Oprisch Mr. Velas, then I'd ask you

President Velas Excuse me. Excuse me. From this point on, let's keep the personal comments out of this meeting and let's discuss what actually needs to be done and ask direct questions and leave the personalities out of it. OK. Beth, are you done questioning Jeff at this point.

Councilwoman Oprisch Thank you, Jeff.

Jeff Vaughn You're welcome.

Councilman Smith I just had a question on Aqua. So, Aqua whether we can go with Aqua, it is going to be the same path, correct, at this point?

Jeff Vaughn Mike, do you mean in regards to water purchase?

Councilman Smith Well, whether we sell to Aqua or we do it, it is going to be the same path. Whereas before, I think there were some different ways to go about it. Like Aqua, I was under the impression that they were going to build a new water plant. But, they probably are not going to do that. They were just going to go on the County water, just like we will at this point.

Jeff Vaughn They have to, Mike. They don't have a choice.

Councilman Smith OK. And then, the past administration kept telling us rates were going to triple. That's just not true, right, from what I am hearing?

Jeff Vaughn Wayne, you can speak to that.

Wayne Cannon The chart that was provided is our best estimate of what rates will need to do in order to provide the level of capital improvements that were projected. Which on the water side was about six and one-half million dollars over ten years, and on the sewer side it was about three and one-half million dollars over ten years. You've got pretty good revenue coming in right now thanks to the rate increases you've already booked. And a lot of what you need to do is to leverage that money that's coming wisely.

Councilman Smith OK.

Wayne Cannon I don't know if you heard that or not. There's an awful lot of breakup on my end.

Councilman Smith Yes. I have no further questions at this time.

Councilwoman Jordan Yes, I do. Thank you both for joining us on this call. I would like to know if you know if the County has secured funding for their project?

Wayne Cannon Yes, they have. I'll speak to that. It's USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture] funded. They have not closed, they've closed on the sewer, they have not closed yet on the water. It will probably happen this summer.

Councilwoman Jordan Oh, OK. Thank you. And, the next question, on page 7, the third paragraph down, regarding the Overbaugh Bellview project, exactly what does that mean "even though the funding pathway forward is not identified at this time"? I may have missed it during your presentation. If so, I am sorry, but I didn't want

Jeff Vaughn Which page, Linda?

Councilwoman Jordan Page 7.

Jeff Vaughn OK. Linda, we assumed the cost that was estimated for that project of \$1.6 million, we put it in the forecast model as a placeholder, so it's not like it's forgotten. We are budgeting to spend money in that area but the way it was proposed to be done, it can't be done that way because it was not consummated in terms of a signed loan agreement with the matching funds. But, we are still planning to spend money in that area but not that number of dollars. Does that make sense?

Councilwoman Jordan Yes. It's there, it's not identified specifically. Correct?

Jeff Vaughn Right.

Councilwoman Jordan OK. All right. Thank you. That's all.

President Velas If no one else has any further questions, I don't hear anybody saying anything, we are going to go quickly around in turn.

Councilman Sabatino No. The only think I would have to say to Jeff is, Jeff, in the last couple years I've been on that Utility, the last few years matter of fact, and we've covered this in a pretty much what you've covered tonight in Utility. Jim Zucal covered it on Council floor. Probably the only wrinkles that we didn't have was Martins Ferry issue but uh, you know, but I think we all know where we are at. And, Jeff, do you agree with the statement that, you know, no administration brought this on. Flint, Michigan precipitated a sleeping giant with the EPA water and woke this whole country up. And it's not only St. Clairsville, it's most communities in general. Would you agree with that?

Jeff Vaughn No. Because Flint, Michigan issue there, not everybody, that was dealing with a water quality issue and passing a different water into the system. It was not approved water. What we are talking about here is the water that you are alluding to, Belmont County water in your pipes. Anytime that you change water, there is a different water chemistry. Once you do that, you can have different outcomes that you are not expecting. The plan here was to buy that water and replace the line and, temporarily, you are going to have a water adjustment period as the water is different and then you can have some brown water effects. And that was experienced in the past. OK. The big deal that we didn't like to do in St. Clairsville was blend the water. They tried that for years and it didn't really work too well because of two different water chemistries. It was either one or the other. But, the bigger function there also was the lack of replacement of lines over many decades that caused the internals of the pipes to be open for corrosion. So, when you add different water chemistries in there, you begin to take away what was called the protective coatings in the lines from one to another and they used what's called the Lang Lehr Index and they had corrosive water up there. I don't understand how that ever occurred because water operators look at that, they have to address that with their EPA inspector that they are not putting a water in a system that has a certain corrosive nature to it. It has to be a depositing water so you look for that Lang Lehr balance before you can put it in there or you are

going to have a taking away process of the pipe, meaning stripping away the deposited mineral coatings, allowing that lead to leach back out into the water and go into service lines. And, in that case, it was really the individual lead service lines on private property that caused a lot of the problem. It was a pretty complicated scenario but it dealt with someone not paying attention to the water being put in the lines and its nature of being a non-corrosive depositing water. So, I can't see how that would happen here with the ability of your operators and the paying attention to those numbers, the EPA looking down your back all the time.

Councilman Sabatino And, I think Wayne may have touched on this, it will be my last question. Our four operators, what would happen to them long term?

Jeff Vaughn Wayne addressed that. It was proposed that they would be shifted into different roles from doing Water Treatment Plant expertise and they would get into leak detection, water audits, even crossing over perhaps into the I&I control program. So, they would always be doing different things to enable them with different skill sets to make them more valuable to the community to work there for as long as they wanted to because you definitely need the manpower.

Councilman Sabatino All right. Thank you, Jeff, and thank you, Jim.

Councilman Bukmir Yes. Going forward, Mr. Vaughn, what would the asset management plan cost us to do that study because we will have to do it, one way or the other?

Jeff Vaughn Wayne can more so address how that works and how he's doing that with Belmont County.

Wayne Cannon We have typically been charging to do asset management plans. EPA has at this point has come out with a fairly streamlined checklist that can be completed locally. What I would really kind of focus on is for you guys to do that as much in house as possible as opposed to hiring Jeff or me or somebody else. But then have somebody come in and if you haven't been exercising valves, do a valve exercising program. If you don't understand the pressures and controls on all the hydrants, have somebody help you with a hydrant check program. Set up those requirements and set up those standard operating procedures so that you can do them in house. But get you started down the way to do some of these specialty tasks that historically most communities haven't done. The format that we have to do this, I didn't get a chance to talk to anybody in St. Clairsville to know what you've done on the maintenance side, what you haven't done on the maintenance side. I'm going to assume that you are somewhere typical of most communities that kind of kicked this can down the road and they've ignored a lot of those common tasks. Those things need to be done, a water audit needs to be done. Those I think are things that you need to spend time, effort and energy on so that you are actually improving the quality of your assets. And, I would say the exact same thing to Aqua Ohio. It doesn't matter who owns the system. It is something that has to be done and it's now the law of EPA. For obvious reasons, they have mandated asset management. They are doing the same thing on sewer but they are writing it into the discharge permits for when those get renewed; they call it a CMOM Plan. It's six, one half dozen of the other. You are going to have to at some point do a better job whoever owns the system of managing that underground infrastructure.

Councilman Bukmir OK. Thank you very much. I have no further questions.

Councilwoman Butler No questions.

Councilman Basile Yea. My question is, so let me just reiterate to try to understand what you are saying, we are looking at the income to the water and sewer enterprise, and by projecting the water and sewer rates over the next ten years, you are saying that we do have enough money, and there is enough money coming in, to continue with these projects and continue with the debt service, am I correct?

Wayne Cannon Correct. On the water side, you would need to borrow to do that six and a half million dollars, I'm showing about four and a half million dollars in three projects. But, on the wastewater side, it looks to me like you would be able to accomplish everything that's being shown, doing it for the most part in house, and the only thing you would be borrowing money for would be that upfront, that Bellview sewers. You'd have to borrow money for that, but once you'd got over that hurdle, you'd be able to do the other sewer projects with savings, monies that you get from rates which is the best way to finance those type of projects. In the long run, if you can avoid paying interest, you are much, much better off. And, I've tried to set this up to the extent possible where you are managing your money to spend as much of your own money on capital projects as possible to minimize the debt.

Councilman Basile Thank you. Actually, I am quite surprised. That's really good news that we can actually do this, and it is feasible for us with minimum loans. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Wayne Cannon Your situation isn't as dire as what a lot of people believe it to be. And, you really are generating a lot of money right now with the rate increases that you've already approved.

Councilman Basile Thank you. I appreciate your input.

Councilwoman Oprisch and Councilman Smith No questions.

Councilwoman Jordan Yes. Is any of this including the underground infrastructure? This report, was there anything in there

Jeff Vaughn Linda, can you repeat that question again, please?

Councilwoman Jordan Sure. Was there anything in the report regarding the underground infrastructure, the pipes that need replaced?

Jeff Vaughn Well, yes, that was the meat of the whole presentation, was the replacement of the water lines. That's the main priority, and, then leaky underground sewer utilities.

Councilwoman Jordan I thought this was just from Ferry. I didn't realize it was all through town. I'm sorry. I haven't had a real chance to look at this report. That's why I don't have many questions. I know I will. So, OK.

Wayne Cannon Pretty much the capital projects that are focused on in here is to do some studies so you can identify where the problems really are both water loss and I&I. And then address those in detail later.

Councilwoman Jordan Also, would the City have any say in rates or would that go through Martins Ferry, Bellaire, Belmont County? How would that work? Hello?

Jeff Vaughn I'm sorry, Linda. I've got feedback here.

Councilwoman Jordan Oh, OK. Would the City have any say in the rates or would that be through Ferry, Bellaire, Belmont County or whomever else we

Jeff Vaughn No. In the public ownership model, you have complete control on that. I mean, we would, there's like a subjective nature to doing this. Like Wayne is explaining, we look at the projects, the priorities, and then try to gauge what their cost is. And then, looking at the cash flow, trying to minimize going into extreme debt, cash flowing a certain amount of it, borrowing for a certain amount. You have total control over that, you have total decision making, because you start upfront by planning the costs out, looking at the impact on your cash flow and your rates, and then you decide how much you want to bite off and move forward with. If you have a mandatory thing you must do, then sometimes that can impact an entity and they've got to borrow a bunch of money and they have a rate increase. But, if you plan forward with this asset management plan to great detail then you should not have surprises out ahead. That's the whole point of the exercise.

Councilwoman Jordan OK. All right. Thank you.

Jeff Vaughn You're welcome.

President Velas I do want to mention, first of all, I want to thank you, Jeff, for your presentation. And Wayne, I want to thank you for your input. I think you put a very good presentation forward. I do want to mention that everybody received this report and the maps which were done electronically but just for your information, I sent an email out and I think a text message letting everyone know Roberta [Clerk] did print up those entire reports and all of the maps hard copies if any of the Council people want to have a hard copy to look at, they are in your mailboxes in the City building. And, if you are, going to put a little bit of work on Tom, if you would call Tom Murphy because he has been working in the building ahead of time, he can let you into the building to get the hard copy. That being said, we will move on at this time. Again, thank you, Jeff, and I appreciate your input.

Jeff Vaughn You are welcome.

REPORTS:

Mayor, Kathryn Thalman First of all, again, much thanks to Jeff Vaughn, and Mr. Wayne Cannon, and Mr. Perry Basile who's put in an awful lot of time looking through the water and investigating what needs to be done. I'd like to thank our Chief, Chief Arbenz. He keeps me updated with the SITREP report which is concerning COVID in Belmont County. As of right now, we have 65 active cases of COVID in Belmont County; unfortunately, it is probably going to get worse before it gets better so again please maintain the social distance and all the hygienic recommendations to mitigate this disease.

I had two good things that I wanted to talk about the Police Department. Mr. Toriseva called me to tell me what a good job our Police Department was doing; they had a suspicious character on their property, called the Police who then came out and apprehended the man. I guess he had been scamming residents, but our Department caught him and took him into custody.

Kudos to Officer Stewart who responded to a call concerning a resident who lives in my neighborhood; she is elderly and in distress. I asked Officer Stewart what I needed to do as I just happened on the situation while walking my dog. He took care of it. And then Officer Greg Clark called Senior Services to get this lady enrolled in Senior Meals on Wheels. Way to go, gentlemen!!

The Rec Department continues to rise to the challenge of online interactive programs. Last week they did a scavenger hunt with an Easter theme. That's wonderful!

Don Smithberger, I'm really happy with you guys. They've already got two of the meters for the City buildings installed! Way to go!!

Tom Murphy continues to help us seek out grants, as well as getting coding and zoning work done, and the GPS mapping!!

And I wanted to say something to Mr. Sabatino. I need to address your statement about Mr. Zucal being dumped. If you are talking about being dumped in terms of his begging me to keep him on because he wanted to maintain his OPERS insurance, then I did. I kept him on. But, he exercised his letter of his own accord. Just so you know that, and Frank, I appreciate your being such a conservator of the City's cash. And, I know you went in to speak with Mr. Zucal. You are welcome to come into my office any time. I have yet to see you. And, if you were on the Utilities and Mr. Zucal, how did this water situation get so bad, and I am asking that to you?

Councilman Sabatino Mr. Pugh, Mr. Zucal and the City did not create, they inherited it.

Mayor Thalman So have I.

Councilman Sabatino This was coming for years and years and years. And, you know, they dealt with it. And, many of the things that Jeff Vaughn said tonight, Jim Zucal told this City Council. And, Mr. Pugh dealt with it how he saw fit. But, they don't deserve to be thrown under the bus. You know, they did things too.

Mayor Thalman No one is being thrown under the bus. Things have been presented factually.

Councilman Sabatino I'm talking, please. You know, I mean, I don't know why it's always theirs to blame. It's the City that has to move forward, you know, let's put bygones be bygones and move forward and be constructive and solve the problem that the EPA has told us to deal with. But, they

Mayor Thalman I'm certainly

Councilman Sabatino Let the financial records show they dealt with objects and, you know, as far as Mr. Zucal, and I'll rest my case after this. What's hard to believe is the way, you know, he was fired by a secretary and he was escorted in an undignified manner out of the City building. I have issues with that.

Mayor Thalman He was not fired. Mr. Sabatino, he was not fired, he exercised his letter after misspeaking to me about ordering meters. And, I thank you for your comments. But, again, my question stands, if they dealt with it, how could it get so bad? So, you can think about that. I would be remiss if I didn't mention, I beg your pardon

Councilman Sabatino [unintelligible] You asked, and I answered it, 94 years, ma'am.

President Velas I think we need to get on with the agenda.

Councilman Basile Actually, the real issue is ignoring the EPA for four years. Dumbest thing I've ever heard of.

President Velas I think we need to get on with the agenda.

Councilman Sabatino I think that gentleman is out of line, Mr. Velas.

Councilman Basile You're out of line, Frank.

Councilman Sabatino No. You are.

President Velas I think right now you are all getting out of line and I think you are not talking over other people. So, I think we've pushed this about as far as it can be pushed. And, let's get on with the agenda.

Mayor Thalman Thank you, Mr. Velas. I agree. I just needed to address that comment because it's a gross inaccuracy of fact.

President Velas OK.

Mayor Thalman I would be remiss if I did not mention Roberta Mertz, who has risen to every challenge I have thrown her way. Roberta is a scrupulous, outstanding employee. She will always have my respect, and I will always have her back. Council has a very large void to fill

when Roberta completes this meeting. Thank you, Roberta, for your attention, your time and your kindness. And, I will say good luck at finding someone to fill her shoes. And that is all I have to say.

Clerk Thank you, Mayor.

Mayor Thalman Absolutely.

President Velas OK. Thank you, Mayor. We'll move on to the Police Chief's report, Matt Arbenz, are you here? Do you have a report?

Police Chief, Matt Arbenz I'm here. I've got very little to report other than supplies are plentiful thanks to several donations. The crime reports are less than minimum thanks to a cooperative community. Other than that, that's it. Thanks.

President Velas Thank you, Matt. Going in turn, does anyone have any questions of Matt?

Councilman Sabatino, Councilman Bukmir, Councilwoman Butler and Councilman Basile No questions.

Councilwoman Oprisch I just want to thank him for his leadership, and all the officers. They are on the front line out there every day. And, I appreciate it.

Councilman Smith and Councilwoman Jordan No questions.

Finance Director, Annette Williams I just wanted to say I've been keeping busy with the daily operations. I'm working on some financial forecasting. And then, to thank the departments for working with me, most everything is by the phone or email. I've been working with Kathryn and Jody on different projects every day. That's all.

President Velas OK. Going in turn, does anyone have any questions of Annette?

Councilman Sabatino, Councilman Bukmir, Councilwoman Butler, Councilman Basile, Councilwoman Oprisch, Councilman Smith and Councilwoman Jordan No questions.

President Velas Thank you. We'll move on to Planning & Zoning.

Planning & Zoning Administrator, Tom Murphy Just a few things for City Council, permits are moving along; we are consistent with last year. Reminders were sent out both to the residents in their utility bills and to contractors; thanks to Anita and Roberta for their help on that. Calls regarding the possible development of some vacant property along Reservoir Road, two locations on West Main Street, and an existing structure on East Main Street. We received those phone calls, all are very preliminary. It's just in the question phase so we can't really go into much detail right now. No property has been purchased yet. In regard to the Census, our response rate is up to 64.7%; some great news there. Questions have come up in regard to the time line. Due to the coronavirus, I've corresponded with our contact and other sources as well.

And, it sounds like the enumeration phase and the self-response phase will be extended to October 31. And the official Census report will be given to the President rather than on December 1, 2020, on April 30, 2021. So we won't know until later next year than we had expected what the population is. And, I have been working with Don Smithberger and Scott Harvey, Dustin Reed and Jeff Vaughn to come up with a plan to enter relevant water valve information into our GIS system. That actual work will start soon, so things are moving along. Thank you.

President Velas OK. Thank you, Tom. Going in turn, does anyone have any questions for Tom?

Councilman Sabatino, Councilman Bukmir and Councilwoman Butler No questions.

Councilman Basile Yes. Hey, Tom, so GIS system, were we able to update that software to the current software and everything is working good?

Administrator Murphy Everything was updated, it was loaded onto my computer, Anita's computer and Donny's computer. Again, we are in the early stages though right now. Our computers will be updated; we are getting new computers. That's not going to be a problem. That software can be loaded onto the new computers. There will be a learning curve obviously because it is new to all of us. But, it looks like all the data transferred over. As time goes by and we get to use the program a bit more, we can work out any bugs in that.

Councilman Basile Great. That's great news. Thanks, Tom.

Councilwoman Oprisch Tom, is there anything else that Council members could do to help with the Census data?

Administrator Murphy My suggestion is always, which really seems to work best in my opinion, is just anybody you see, talk to them. Bring it up. When someone stops in or contacts me about a permit, I bring it up to them just to try to push them along if they haven't filled it out. I've offered my services, name and phone number, they can always contact me and I can assist them with that Census.

Councilwoman Oprisch Thank you.

Councilman Smith No questions.

Councilwoman Jordan I don't have any questions, but I wanted to let Tom know that it's time now for people to cut grass. I witnessed somebody on South Sugar Street cutting the grass and leaving the clippings in the road. So, I don't know if you send something out in the utility bills or how you handle that. But, it might be a good time to remind people not to leave the clippings in the road.

Administrator Murphy Thanks, Linda.

Councilwoman Jordan OK. Thanks, Tom.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance, Chair Mike Smith I don't have a report. It's kind of tough to meet during this time, but I mentioned to Annette that if there is something pressing, we are going to have to get together. And, every other Committee is in the same boat. If we are going to meet, we are going to have to publish it because it has to be open to the public. And, that could kinda be a big hassle, but if there is something very pressing, we could meet in person. Annette is going to let us know, me or anybody else on the Finance Committee.

Utilities, Chair Beth Oprisch Utilities meeting is not scheduled until May 4th. Anita as usual is right on top of it, so there will be a few matters I will discuss with her and get with the Committee about pool meters and park pool credits. And then we will also have to discuss disconnects and penalties, where we will be with that in May. So, I would expect a report at the next meeting.

Police, Chair Mark Bukmir No report.

Streets – North Side, Chair Terra Butler No report.

Streets – South Side, Chair Beth Oprisch No report.

Safety, Chair Terra Butler No report.

Building and Grounds, Chair Perry Basile Yea, up by the baseball fields, Donny last month had the guys push a lot of that street debris and stuff off. They got rid of it, so that we could clear out an area. And, I know it has been too wet to do anything, but thanks Donny for taking care of that. And, I'm looking forward to like when it dries up a little bit to either put stone or reseed it or whatever we have to do. I appreciate it. Thank you. That's it.

Planning Commission, Chair Frank Sabatino No. Tom covered everything. Nothing new.

Fire, Chair Frank Sabatino Just a couple things, we had a regular scheduled meeting last Wednesday, and it was cancelled. We've rescheduled it for the 29th of April because of the social distancing and the amount of people. We are going to have to look at newspaper, we're trying to find a place that will accommodate, and we can be spread out. So, we will be publishing something, I assume, either next Monday, the 27th, or Tuesday, the 28th. And, anticipating a meeting on the 29th at 3 o'clock, location undetermined as of yet. That's all. And, thank the guys for what they are doing out there, the first responders.

President Velas Amen to that.

Recreation, Chair Linda Jordan There are child-specific exercises from Ohio Valley CrossFit on the facebook page, the Center's facebook page, that is. And, at a later date, there will also be senior exercises led by Mover'cise instructor, as well as a summertime safety video led by Fire

Chief Tim Hall. They are also working with the Police Department to add some safety videos. They will be doing a video of somebody from Ponzani's Landscaping on the basics of landscaping and how to determine poison in your yard. And, Sean [Hanley] also had to put caution tape around the amphitheatre area and the playground area. I'll be meeting with Debbie [Reed] to help her secure vendors for concerts very soon. And, that's all.

Park District, Chair Linda Jordan No report.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS:

President Velas There is nothing on the agenda in the way of legislation, but I'll defer to our Law Director, Elizabeth Glick.

Law Director, Elizabeth Glick You are correct. There is no pending legislation before Council tonight.

NEW BUSINESS:

President Velas OK. Thank you very much. That takes us to the end of the agenda. The only other thing under New Business is Council Clerk. I want to just remind Council that Roberta's last day as Council Clerk will be April 30th. So, if you can kind of get your heads together on the phone, email, text, whatever, if you have any suggestions or opinions or if you've talked to anybody. We need to try to get somebody in that position as soon as possible.

I'm assuming at this point under the current state of the country with the COVID-19, our next meeting is Monday, May 4th. I am assuming at this point in time that at the very least that meeting and very possibly the second meeting in May will also be a teleconference meeting. That's not definite yet, but that is the way it is kind of looking right now.

Councilwoman Oprisch Jim, this is Beth. While we were still on Council Clerk, I just also want to thank Roberta for all of her efforts as our Clerk. And, I just want to thank her. I think she did a great job, and I appreciate it.

Clerk Thank you, Beth.

Councilman Basile I second that, Beth.

Clerk Thank you, Perry.

Councilwoman Butler I third that. I didn't know when to interject here but, this is Terra, and I want to reiterate exactly what Beth said. I think she's done a fantastic job and we appreciate the work that she's done.

Clerk Thank you, Terra.

Councilman Smith I agree. And, thank you, Roberta.

Clerk Thank you, Mike.

President Velas That is correct. I think Roberta has done a really good job, especially in these last few months when the meetings have gotten very long and the minutes have almost been like a short story or novel rather than just minutes, so she has worked very hard on that and I also want to thank her. She's done a good job as far as I'm concerned. And, I also want to repeat on that for Council those copies that she made for everybody are in your mailboxes. If you want to call Tom, I am going again to put you to work, and he will let you in to get your report.

The only other thing I want to say is with what we are facing with the water and sewer issues, we've got a lot of things on our plate. We are fighting issues with COVID-19. We don't know where we are going with that. The country has a lot of issues and so do we here in the City. So, at this time, I would like to make a comment that I think in order for us to do our jobs sitting here on this City Council, we need to concentrate on our jobs, what we are doing and what we are supposed to be doing. Let's forget how we got here, whether it took place last week, last month, 10 years ago or 50 years ago. We are in the middle of the desert and how we got here doesn't matter. At this point, the point is trying to get out of it. So, I think we would serve the City and the residents much better if we would from everybody's point of view let's leave the personal issues out and let's concentrate on what's in the best interest of the City. That's all I have to say.

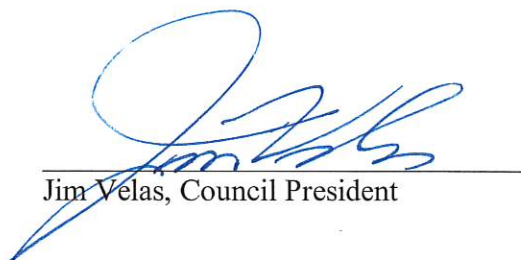
ADJOURNMENT:

President Velas At this point, I will entertain a motion to adjourn the Council meeting.

Councilman Smith offers a motion to adourn; **Councilman Basile** seconds the motion.

President Velas Moved and seconded. The meeting is adjourned.


Roberta Mertz, Council Clerk


Jim Velas, Council President