

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**May 18, 2020 Meeting**

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

Jim Velas, Council President  
Perry Basile, Council, 1<sup>st</sup> Ward  
Mark Bukmir, Council, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward  
Terra Butler, Council, 4<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Linda Jordan, Council-At-Large  
Beth Oprisch, Council-At-Large  
Frank Sabatino, Council 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 at 7:30pm. President Velas led Council in the Pledge of Allegiance. Council Clerk called roll.

**ROLL CALL:**

Basile	HERE	Oprisch	HERE
Bukmir	HERE	Sabatino	HERE
Butler	HERE	Smith	HERE
Jordan	HERE		

Seven (7) Present

Zero (0) Absent

**NEW BUSINESS:** No new business

**MINUTES:** President Velas confirmed all councilmembers received the minutes from the May 4, 2020 meeting. Mayor Thalman had a correction to her report regarding phrasing. Correction will be made to the minutes and voted at June 1 meeting.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** No correspondence.

**SUPERINTENDENT OF GENERAL SERVICES UPDATE:** A major slip was repaired at the Highlands, finishing work continues on the water tank, a water main break was repaired, and an electric pole was replaced on Butler Street. An insurance claim has been placed on the light post that was hit at the corner of Sugar and Main Streets. AEP is investigating its route for the new 69-kV line and may contact residents. Residents may contact the city if they have any questions.

Compliments were given by President Velas to Don Smithberger for his crew's timely electric pole replacement last Wednesday.

**REPORTS:**

**Mayor Thalman** expressed her appreciation to Aqua Ohio, engineer Jeff Vaughn, and council for bringing closure at the last council meeting after a thorough consideration of all options on deciding how the city's water and sewer systems would be handled. She commented that she felt that two of the council members had thrown away their opportunity to represent their constituents at the last council meeting due to either their vote to abstain or their absence. This was refuted by Councilman Sabatino, who said he had a last minute complication that prevented his attendance at the meeting.

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE CITY COUNCIL**  
**May 18, 2020 Meeting**

Discussions continued with RCAP this week, as well as Mr. Vaughn and Councilwoman Beth Oprisch, utilities chair. Funding for the flooding issue on Bellview Street is being sought with urgency. Also discussed was funding for one thousand feet of pipe to connect to the county's water line. With Memorial Day approaching, the mayor reminded all that we must not forget the sacrifices made by many to protect our rights. The Rotary Club has implemented a service project, placing American flags in residents' yards as a fundraiser. Six national holidays will see the flags on display in our community to display patriotism. Kirke Porterfield can be contacted to purchase a flag. The mayor thanked Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Klotz for their generous donation toward the city purchasing a K-9 officer. The mayor also thanked Pam & Morgan Lacefield of Domino's Pizza for donating pizza certificates for city employees. Mayor Thalman urged residents to remain vigilant during this pandemic. Although businesses are reopening, social distancing, wearing masks, hand washing, and exercising caution should all be practiced. Protocol to reopen the Municipal Building is in the process. At last report, Belmont County had 332 reported COVID-19 cases, with nearly half at the prison. No numbers for St. Clairsville exclusively. The mayor participated in the Council of Churches' National Day of Prayer on May 7. She concluded by congratulating the City of Martins Ferry and Mayor John Davies and his team on the recent news of the reopening of East Ohio Regional Hospital.

**Police Chief Matt Arbenz** reported that there have been less traffic stops, but drug offenses and overdoses are up. Getting a K-9 unit will help combat these problems; which donations have been received. All officers were recently trained on Narcan and will be carried in cruisers. Masks continue to be collected to sanitize and return to their owners. Chief Arbenz also reported that he secured training for the officers through the company the city contracts for its Tasers. Continued professional online training is \$800 annually, but through trading work duties to Chief Arbenz, an additional year's training was obtained at no cost.

Councilwoman Butler and Councilwoman Oprisch commended the police force for their performance during the pandemic.

**Finance Director Annette Williams** anticipates having a utility report and income tax collection report and related legislation next month.

**Planning & Zoning Administrator Tom Murphy** discussed Resolution No. 2020-12 to demolish a vacant house at 104 Jefferson Street. The city is eligible for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through Belomar. The deadline to apply is Wednesday and would need to pass on an emergency basis. Pictures of the structure were sent to council via email. Estimated removal cost is \$16,500. Mr. Murphy stated that this resolution is simply to apply for the funds.

Councilman Sabatino was pleased to hear the house may be removed from his ward. Mr. Murphy noted Joan Francisco is the owner of the house along with several others after Councilwoman Oprisch asked. Letters have been sent over the years with no reply. Councilwoman Jordan asked which engineers were contacted for demolition. Mr. Murphy clarified that this resolution is just to apply for the funds. Publications and bid will take place after it is known whether the city will receive the funds. Councilman Basile asked about the qualifications of a company that could tear down the structure. Mr. Murphy stated depending on lead paint, asbestos, etc., there could be different requirements on qualification and disposal.

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE CITY COUNCIL**  
**May 18, 2020 Meeting**

Mr. Murphy also reported the Ohio EPA approved the city's storm water management plan. A checklist of tasks to complete this year was given and many have been completed or in progress.

Mr. Murphy said the 2020 census response rate is around 70% for the city, after asked by Councilwoman Oprisch. Enumerators are still scheduled to work this summer. President Velas urged all residents who have not completed the census to do so.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Finance Chair Mike Smith** reviewed Ordinances 2020-10 and 2020-11. Chief Arbenz commented that Ordinance 2020-10 would place laptops back inside the cruisers. This would allow officers to run background checks, license plates, etc. rather than contacting central dispatch or allowing information to be on countywide radio, among other advantages discussed.

Councilwoman Jordan asked how many laptops would be purchased and if they would be used strictly for work purposes and not Internet surfing and social media. Chief Arbenz stated two laptops and four mounting units would be purchased and assured that the laptops would only be used for work. Social media however is often used for investigations. Councilwoman Jordan further inquired about costs. Chief Arbenz noted there would be an annual cost for leads that will be roughly \$2,200. The quotes for the mounting units are close to \$9,600; however, there is the possibility units could be obtained for free or at least a very low cost; laptops will run roughly \$8,600. The city will be responsible for paying \$924.

Finance Director Williams commented that Ordinance 2020-11 would create a separate line item to track receipts and expenditures related to the K-9 unit, including the donations received.

**Utilities Chair Beth Oprisch:** No report

**Police Chair Mark Bukmir:** No report

**Streets – North Side Chair Terra Butler** addressed a concern by one of her constituents that dogs have been defecating in Union Cemetery or used animal waste bags from the bike trail have been thrown in the cemetery. She asked if trashcans can be placed in the cemetery. Mayor Thalman said that Mr. Smithberger is already working on it.

Councilwoman Butler also added she talked to Bill Mehl, who commented on his experiences on his years living on Overbaugh Avenue and the related flooding and sewer issues. She read an email she received from him. He discussed the many times his floor drains backed up into his basement upwards of 18 inches deep after severe storms. Many of his personal items were damaged or destroyed, including repairs and improvements made between water backups. His homeowners insurance did not cover the damages; many thousands were spent. Mr. Mehl urged council to find a solution for Overbaugh Avenue and Bellview Street as soon as possible.

**Streets – South Side Chair Beth Oprisch:** No report

**Safety Chair Terra Butler:** No report

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE CITY COUNCIL**  
**May 18, 2020 Meeting**

**Building and Grounds Chair Perry Basile** mentioned water drainage issues in his ward he discussed with the mayor. They were referred to Mr. Smithberger.

**Planning Commission Chair Frank Sabatino:** No report

**Fire Chair Frank Sabatino** reported regular meetings were held on Wednesday, April 29 and Wednesday, May 13. Personnel matters, contracts, and roof replacement were discussed. A grant and stimulus check was received through the Health Department and HHS for supplies and operational losses. Next meeting will be Wednesday, June 10 at the ECOESC building.

Councilwoman Oprisch asked how the meetings are being conducted and if they are open to the public. Councilman Sabatino stated the board meetings are in-person with teleconferencing available and are always open to the public. Councilwoman Oprisch inquired about a board vacancy and whether it has been advertized. Councilman Sabatino said it is ongoing.

**Recreation Chair Linda Jordan** recommended the Recreation Board have a meeting soon to discuss the summer concert series. Concerts may be considered mass gatherings. Any decisions will be publicized.

**Park District Chair Linda Jordan** reported Allen Pool will not be open for Memorial Day weekend due to the restrictions on social gatherings. The board will be meeting to discuss when it will open for the season. Councilwoman Butler asked if the board had met today, which Councilwoman Jordan replied no. Councilwoman Jordan could not confirm the report from Councilwoman Butler that pool passes would remain \$100. Discounted rates may be possible. No decisions would be made until the board meets. Mayor Thalman mentioned guidelines are published at [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov) for soft opening procedures. The mayor also asked about shelter rental costs. Councilwoman Oprisch asked if Memorial Park is open, to which Councilwoman Jordan stated the park is open, but the basketball courts and playground equipment are off limits. The high school track and school facilities are closed to the public until June 1, per President Velas. Concerns were addressed about the continued use of the park equipment; Councilwoman Jordan will pass these along to the board and ensure the playgrounds are marked off limits.

**ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS:**

**Law Director Elizabeth Glick** explained the three pieces of legislation before council.

A motion was made by Councilman Smith that the rules requiring three separate readings be suspended on Ordinance 2020-10 and that the ordinance be passed on an emergency basis; seconded by Councilman Basile.

Councilwoman Jordan asked why the ordinance needs to be passed on an emergency. Chief Arbenz answered the department has been approved through the grant process and swift action has been requested.

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**May 18, 2020 Meeting**

**ORDINANCE 2020-10: AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT FUND #2051 (FEDERAL); AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

**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 Rules requiring three separate readings suspended

Vote to pass Ordinance 2020-10:

**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 Carried

A motion was made by Councilwoman Oprisch that the rules requiring three separate readings be suspended on Ordinance 2020-11 and that the ordinance be passed on an emergency basis; seconded by Councilwoman Butler.

Councilwoman Jordan asked if the emergency language is necessary. Law Director Glick noted since we are already receiving funds, it would assist Finance Director Williams in tracking the funds. Councilwoman Jordan requested that if legislation will be voted upon, council be advised before the day of the meeting. Law Director Glick agreed and said she became aware of it late. Councilman Smith concurred and said we have done this with other financial legislation before. Councilwoman Jordan also asked about the costs associated with the K-9 unit. President Velas clarified that this ordinance is only to create the line item and track funds/donations.

**ORDINANCE 2020-11: AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH NEW REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION ACCOUNTS FOR THE POLICE FUND #2901 FOR K9 OPERATIONS; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

**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 Rules requiring three separate readings suspended

Vote to pass Ordinance 2020-11:

**ROLL CALL:**

Basile	YES	Oprisch	YES
--------	-----	---------	-----

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE CITY COUNCIL**  
**May 18, 2020 Meeting**

Bukmir	YES	Sabatino	YES
Butler	YES	Smith	YES
Jordan	YES		
Roll Call Vote:	Seven (7) YES	Zero (0) NO	Motion Carried

A motion was made by Councilwoman Jordan to suspend the rules requiring three separate readings be suspended on Resolution 2020-12 and that the resolution be passed on an emergency basis; seconded by Councilman Sabatino.

**RESOLUTION 2020-12:** A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF ST. CLAIRSVILLE TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO BELOMAR FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLEARANCE/DEMOLITION OF AN ABANDONED/DILAPIDATED RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE LOCATED AT 104 JEFFERSON STREET, ST. CLAIRSVILLE; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

**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	Rules requiring three separate readings suspended

Vote to pass Resolution 2020-12:

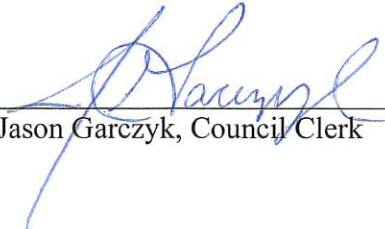
**ROLL CALL:**

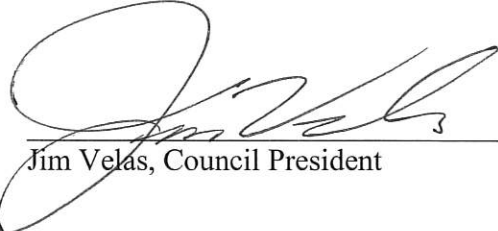
Basile	YES	Oprisch	YES
Bukmir	YES	Sabatino	YES
Butler	YES	Smith	YES
Jordan	YES		
Roll Call Vote:	Seven (7) YES	Zero (0) NO	Motion Carried

**OLD BUSINESS:** Councilwoman Oprisch and several other councilmembers acknowledged Jody Williams for her service to the city.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 8:53pm.

Next meeting will be held Monday, June 1, 2020 at 7:30pm via teleconference.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jason Garczyk, Council Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Velas, Council President