

ST. CLAIRSVILLE CITY COUNCIL

August 17, 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
Don Smithberger, Super. of General Services
Annette Williams, Finance Director
Matthew Arbenz, Chief of Police
Tom Murphy, Planning & Zoning Administrator
Elizabeth Glick, Law Director

The meeting was called to order by Council President Jim Velas at 7:30pm. President Velas led Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Basile	HERE	Oprisch	HERE
Bukmir	HERE	Sabatino	HERE
Butler	HERE	Smith	HERE
Jordan	HERE	Seven (7) Present	Zero (0) Absent

MINUTES: President Velas confirmed all councilmembers received the minutes from the last meeting. Councilwoman Butler made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 3, 2020 Council meeting; motion seconded by Councilman Basile.

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	Minutes Approved

NEW BUSINESS: Councilman Sabatino brought to Council's attention that the wording of the meeting notice in *The Times Leader* implied it was to be held in person. Council Clerk stated the same language has been used in press releases since the meetings have been teleconferenced. President Velas added meetings will continue to be teleconferenced until arrangements can be made otherwise.

Superintendent of General Services Don Smithberger reported streets are being swept, patched, and sidewalks are being repaired.

REPORTS: Mayor Thalman reported the City has been approved by the Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association (OMEGA) Board to receive a \$155,000 matching grant, pending the state's approval. The funds would be used to connect the City's water system to the County system. The mayor thanked engineer Jeff Vaughn for putting the proposal together. OMEGA noted the great degree of cooperation between the City and the County. The City applied for and received \$134,000 in CARES Funds. The funds will ensure teleconferencing abilities are in place should the pandemic get worse or another crisis arise. The funds will also benefit the restrooms at the Recreation Center, including touchless sinks and toilets. Also, the loan and grant application period for FY2022 has started and may be submitted through the Ohio Public Works Commission. The City will be working on that. Also, more information will be distributed regarding small business loans through the CARES Act. Questions can be directed to the

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Chamber of Commerce. The mayor encouraged all to participate in the recent geocaching quest sponsored by Belmont County Tourism.

A grant is being sought to conduct an in-depth study for an alternate route around the City. The mayor commended Martins Ferry Mayor John Davies and the crew responsible for reopening the East Ohio Regional Hospital. The merchant sidewalk sales and food trucks uptown on Fridays have been very popular. The mayor thanked Mr. Smithberger and his crew for all their work as well as Chief Arbenz for another recent drug bust. She also encouraged residents to serve as poll workers during the upcoming election. A recent celebration at the Municipal Building was not paid for using city funds and no productivity was lost. Lastly, the mayor requested the reappointment of Ed Bober to the Board of Recreation.

Councilwoman Oprisch made a motion to approve the mayoral appointment of Ed Bober to the Board of Recreation; motion seconded by Councilman Basile.

ROLL CALL:

Basile	YES	Oprisch	YES
Bukmir	YES	Sabatino	YES
Butler	YES	Smith	YES
Jordan	ABSTAIN		

Roll Call Vote: Six (6) YES Zero (0) NO One (1) ABSTAIN Motion Approved

Councilwoman Jordan added that Ed Bober is President of the Board.

Police Chief Matt Arbenz was not present.

Finance Director Annette Williams has been working with the auditor to finish last year's audit. COVID Funds will be used according to their specifications, including reimbursements directly related to the pandemic.

Planning & Zoning Administrator Tom Murphy reported several new businesses moving in town. Kennen & Kennen Realty will open in a few months at the former Colonial Restaurant. David Edwards will be opening Edwards Absolute Kinetics, a physical therapy practice, in Gabe Hays' building; Wallace Pancher will move to the rear of the same building. Allison Wojtasek will be opening Evolve Fitness in the Masonic Building. Mr. Murphy has been working with Belomar to assist a homeowner in obtaining a housing rehab grant. This has been a two year process, but the roughly \$60,000 grant was approved last week. New house construction is underway at 112 Cooper Drive. The 2020 Census self-response rate is 72.3% for the City.

Mayor Thalman recommended the appointment of Peggy Riccadonna to the Board of Architectural Review. She is the owner of the Snotty Pooch and a resident of the City.

Councilwoman Jordan made a motion to approve the mayoral appointment of Peggy Riccadonna to the Board of Architectural Review; motion seconded by Councilwoman Oprisch.

ROLL CALL:

Basile	YES	Oprisch	YES
Bukmir	YES	Sabatino	YES

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

Councilman Basile inquired whether there is a color palette for the Historic District. Mr. Murphy said at one time there was, but it was discarded. Chris Hudson, a member of the Board of Architectural Review, was recommended to match colors. Mr. Basile would like to add a few colors for consideration.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Chair Mike Smith reported the committee met on Friday and was open to the public. Water and sewer revenue and RITA collections are down. Telecommunication and Internet savings for the City were discussed. COVID Funds can only be used for specific purposes.

Utilities Chair Beth Oprisch plans to have a committee meeting before the next Council meeting. Electric disconnections will happen tomorrow with 33 customers on the list. \$50 reconnection fee has continued to be waived. Anita Robinson was hopeful more residents will contact the City before disconnections are made.

Councilman Basile asked about charitable organizations assisting with utility payments. Ms. Robinson said a few donations have been received from the Council of Churches and the Community Action Commission. Information is available by contacting the utilities office.

Police Chair Mark Bukmir: No report

Streets – North Side Chair Terra Butler requested Mr. Smithberger to contact her about road issues and concerns in her ward.

Streets – South Side Chair Beth Oprisch: No report

Safety Chair Terra Butler: No report

Building and Grounds Chair Perry Basile discussed updates to the restrooms at the Recreation Center. Ways to save money on data and phone service costs were also mentioned.

Planning Commission Chair Frank Sabatino: No report

Fire Chair Frank Sabatino reported the next meeting will be August 26 at 3pm at the ECOESC building.

Recreation Chair Linda Jordan said Mr. Hanley informed the Board at today's meeting that the \$577.47 in donations received at the four Tuesday concert series will be donated toward the K-9 fund. The Board thanked those who donated. Next meeting will be Monday, September 21.

Councilwoman Oprisch requested from Councilwoman Jordan the donation amount received during last year's concert series.

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Park District Chair Linda Jordan said the next meeting will be Monday, August 24.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS:

Law Director Elizabeth Glick announced the two pieces of legislation before Council. Ordinance No. 2020-26 and Resolution No. 2020-27 are both on their third reading.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Oprisch to approve Ordinance No. 2020-26; seconded by Councilwoman Butler.

ORDINANCE No. 2020-26: AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING THE FEEDING OF WILDLIFE WITHIN THE CITY OF ST. CLAIRSVILLE

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 Councilman Oprisch to approve Resolution No. 2020-27; seconded by Councilman Butler.

RESOLUTION No. 2020-27: A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF JEREMY GREENWOOD AS THE DIRECTOR OF SAFETY AND PUBLIC SERVICES FROM AND AFTER AUGUST 17, 2020

ROLL CALL:

Basile	YES	Oprisch	YES
Bukmir	NO	Sabatino	NO
Butler	YES	Smith	YES
Jordan	NO		
Roll Call Vote:	Four (4) YES	Three (3) NO	Motion Carried

Councilwoman Oprisch extended a welcome to Jeremy Greenwood as the new Director of Safety and Public Services.

Councilwoman Oprisch asked what constitutes a quorum for a Council meeting. A special meeting was called by Council for last August 10, but was canceled due to lack of quorum. Law Director Glick stated quorum is a majority of Council: four members. It was not clear whether the particular issue of that meeting was suitable for a special meeting – with uncertainty being addressed that same morning. The nature of special meetings will be assessed for future instances. Council can determine what is considered urgent, but such matters have been the subject of litigation and past court cases. Ms. Oprisch added that special meetings had never been questioned in the past. Law Director Glick stated Council’s quorum stands for special meetings.

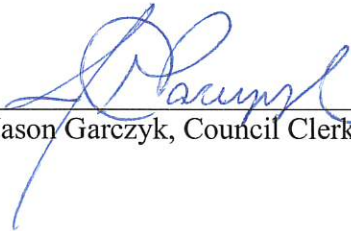
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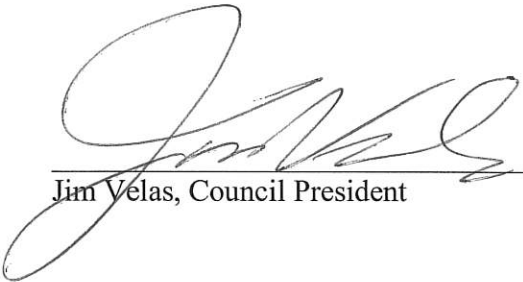
OLD BUSINESS: Councilman Sabatino asked for an update regarding the citizens' letter addressed at the last meeting. Ms. Glick said a letter is being sent to the Ohio Ethics Commission and is still being drafted. Councilwoman Jordan asked the Law Director if the mayor is allowed to speak against racism of any form. The Law Director said the mayor has no authority to take any actions against Council. Due to the open-ended nature of the letter, guidance from the Ohio Ethics Commission will be sought. Councilwoman Oprisch clarified that per the last meeting, the letter is not to be discussed.

ADJOURNMENT: With no action to take and there being no further business to come before Council, Councilman Oprisch made a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 7:30pm via teleconference.



Jason Garczyk, Council Clerk



Jim Velas, Council President