

ST. CLAIRSVILLE CITY COUNCIL

February 1, 2021 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
Jeremy Greenwood, 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 7:35 pm. President Velas led Council in the Pledge of Allegiance. Members of the public were thanked for listening.

ROLL CALL:

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

Councilman Sabatino asked where the revision was made on January 19th minutes. Clerk Shaw stated it was revised in the Planning and Zoning section.

MINUTES: President Velas confirmed all councilmembers received the minutes from the last meeting. Councilman Basile made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 19, 2021 Council meeting; motion seconded by Councilman Butler.

ROLL CALL:

Basile	YES	Oprisch	YES
Bukmir	YES	Sabatino	NO
Butler	YES	Smith	YES
Jordan	YES		
Roll Call Vote:	Six (6) YES	One (1) NO	Minutes Approved

REPORTS: Mayor Kathryn Thalman met with the County Commissioners regarding water issues and upcoming projects. Several local businesses held a meeting to explain the concept of Second Saturday to bring business to our local stores; this will target the second Saturday of the month. Mayor met the new President of Ohio University Eastern and future events to benefit the college. The Mayor participated in a teleconference with Governor DeWine; he states Ohio is behind in vaccines due to not receiving rapidly. The Belmont County Health Department gives the shots on Thursdays to 75 and up; to make an appointment call 740-695-1202. The Mayor congratulated Dr. John Johnson, Bernie Albertini, and Mayor John Davies for the opening of East Ohio Regional Hospital. Mayor thanked the Street Department for clearing the roads from the recent snow and to the resident who recently donated to the Canine Fund. February 1st is the beginning of Black History Month, and the Mayor urged all to visit the Underground Railroad Museum website [ugrrf.org].

Councilman Sabatino read a letter to the Mayor given to him by Matthew Berher (attached to minutes). President Velas stated this is not Council-related matter and will not be discussed further.

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Councilman Smith stated he toured the Underground Railroad in Flushing and encouraged residences to visit.

Service /Safety Director Jeremy Greenwood had several meetings, including Mueller Leak Detection training, GIS mapping to update our mapping system, AMP on joint Hydro Project, Rob Stein regarding the Commons retainage amounts, and with Jeff Vaughn (Vaughn, Coast, & Vaughn) to update on the East End Water Connection grant and will need Council's approval when processed. Mr. Greenwood has begun Utility Clerk interviews and will have an update for Council next meeting. Mr. Greenwood attended the Rec Center Board meeting [Zoom] to discuss upcoming projects and issues that need addressed. The City and Rec Center restrooms will be updated to touchless fixtures. Architectural Review Board changed the size of the Utility awning to 10ft. Mr. Greenwood will be meeting with Belmont County Soil and Water on Wednesday regarding renting the building on S. Sugar. Mr. Greenwood is working to transfer the fire department building to Cumberland Trail Fire District; they will then apply for grants to update the building. Mayor's Court will begin when they receive more information. Mr. Greenwood is waiting on legislation to hire a Superintendent. Clemens Nelson has assisted in updating the administrative Policies and Procedures manual. Budget meetings will continue with all department heads. Mr. Greenwood will have appropriations legislation next meeting for Council to pass. East End Water Connection is moving forward and is waiting on funding approval. Mr. Greenwood has a meeting tomorrow to discuss the next project phase for the Water Distribution System. He is applying for an Ohio EPA Water Supply Revolving Loan Account that could potentially be a principal loan forgiveness. The Electric department is doing service work, trimming trees, and repairing streetlights. The Water/Wastewater crews have fixed waterline breaks and are jetting the sewers. The Street department has used 150 tons of our 250-300 reserve of salt this year. Mr. Greenwood wants to start an Employee of the Month Program to recognize our staff. Mr. Greenwood reports no one is out sick; additional rapid tests have been ordered.

Councilman Sabatino asks what temperature we can effectively cold patch; the Mayor stated 40 degrees. Councilman Sabatino stated he saw the crews cold patching last week when it was below 40 degrees. Mr. Greenwood said due to the high volume of resident complaints cold patching is a temporary fix until the road can be repaired. Councilwoman Butler asked if we have other options than cold patching; Mr. Greenwood stated cold patching is our best option due to weather. Councilwoman Jordan asked if cold patching could be used at any temperature and the Dura Patcher at freezing temperatures, and Mr. Greenwood said he would have to check on the temperature for the Dura Patcher. He stated while cold patching can be used at freezing temperature it may not hold as well at the lower temperatures.

Councilman Bukmir asked if we have obtained a contractor for the East End Water Connection; Mr. Greenwood stated it has not been put out to bid due to not having the funding yet approved.

Councilman Smith asked the status on the Council iPads. Mr. Greenwood stated that the iPads need to be set up and the City email uploaded onto them. Ms. Glick is developing a form for Council members to sign regarding the iPads being City property.

Police Chief Matt Arbenz reports there were 249 calls, 48 traffic stops, 11 criminal arrests, and 7 accidents. Chief Arbenz reports that 2 officers were sent to training in Cleveland for the Drug

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Interdiction Program. Chief Arbenz has found a way to cut the cost of the Youth Program; Councilwoman Oprisch has set up a meeting with Judge Davies (Juvenile Court) on Friday to see if they can assist. Chief Arbenz commended the Street department for their hard work to clear the roads during the recent snow.

Councilman Smith commended Officer Clark for his hard work in the community and checking on the elderly. Chief Arbenz stated that Officer Clark oversees our elder outlook program and works with Doug Butts, Adult Protective Services, to assist the elderly in the City.

Finance Director Annette Williams reports that they are finishing correction on 2020, and will have the final report at the next meeting. Ms. Williams is working on the 2021 budget; she will send the numbers to the Finance members for review and will be ready to pass for the next meeting.

Councilman Sabatino asked if the books are balanced for 2020. Ms. Williams states that the books are balanced but they are reviewing and making any corrections to ensure a clean audit. Councilman Sabatino asked when the visiting clerk started. Ms. Williams said December. Councilman Sabatino asked her to verify her contract was through March 31st at \$35/hr. including travel time (to date totaling \$6,332). Ms. Williams explained this was correct, but the need of the traveling clerk will now reduce. Councilman Sabatino asked Ms. Williams when she received her \$5,000 sign on; Ms. Williams explained in September. Ms. Williams stated that the traveling clerk is also helping streamline the processes to help better the City. Several Council members thanked and commended Ms. Williams for her hard work with approximately \$500,000 in Covid money received this year to assist the City.

Planning & Zoning Administrator Tom Murphy had GIS mapping meeting and training for the employees; monthly meeting will be available to address any issues. Mr. Murphy met with the resident building the single-family home on Circle Dr. and the contractor putting in the sewer line. Mr. Murphy also met with Scott Harvey to discuss the tap system. Mr. Murphy and Mr. Greenwood reviewed the plans for parking options for the CFM gas station on East Main Street.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Chair Mike Smith: Next meeting is February 16th at 6:45 P.M. Councilman Smith stated that Ms. Williams is working on the budget that must be submitted by March 1st.

Utilities Chair Terra Butler: Councilwoman Butler reports at tonight's committee meeting they reviewed several policies and tabled a few. Councilwoman Butler will meet with Utility Manager, Anita Robinson, to revise some things.

Police Chair Beth Oprisch: Police committee meeting is tonight after the Council meeting and will have a full report next Council meeting. Chief Arbenz and Councilwoman Oprisch have a meeting with Judge Davies and Ms. Shunk to discuss funding for the Youth Program. Councilwoman Oprisch thanked the Police department for all their hard work.

Streets – North Side Chair Perry Basile: No report. Councilman Basile commended the Street department for their hard work clearing the recent snow.

Streets – South Side Chair Frank Sabatino: No report

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Safety Chair Frank Sabatino: No report

Building and Grounds Chair Perry Basile: Councilman Basile and Mr. Greenwood have begun to review remodeling the City and Rec Center bathrooms. They have also gathered information to rent out the Landscape and Grounds office building [131 S. Sugar] and storage building [102 St. Clair].

Planning Commission Chair Frank Sabatino: No report

Fire Chair Frank Sabatino: No report. Next meeting February 10th at 3pm.

Recreation Chair Linda Jordan: Councilwoman Jordan reports that this is the first year that the soccer and basketball programs have been cancelled due to COVID. Roller hockey registration began February 11th.

Park District Chair Linda Jordan: No report.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS: Law Director Elizabeth Glick addressed one piece of legislation before Council.

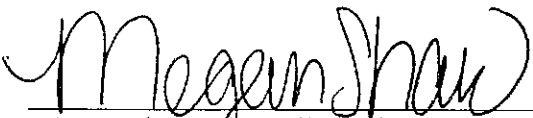
ORDINANCE No. 2021-1: AN ORDINANCE TO APPROVE THE PLAN OF OPERATION AND GOVERNANCE FOR THE CITY OF ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S NATURAL GAS AGGREGATION PROGRAM AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY


ROLL CALL:

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

ADJOURNMENT: With no further business to come before Council, Councilman Basile made a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:33pm.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 7:30pm via teleconference.


Megan Shaw, Council Clerk


Jim Velas, Council President

Matthew Berher
124 West Main Street
St. Clairsville, Ohio 43950

January 19, 2021

Mayor Thalman
100 Market Street
St. Clairsville, Ohio 43950

Dear Mayor Thalman,

It comes with great disappointment that I have to pen, yet another letter concerning this same topic. A topic brought to light most recently by your own Facebook post. A post that certainly did not hold up to your campaign promise of ending the political divisions within the city and working together as a whole. Since you've taken office, I would venture to say that you've done more to fan the flames of political division than you have done to end it. From your all so telling silence when a councilman's post was under scrutiny to your own Facebook posts. You are not a representative for all – you are a representative for some and only the 'some' you choose.

Yes, everyone has the inalienable right to free speech as protected by the Constitution. However, what many seem to forget is that you do not have the right to shrink away from the consequences that come from that free speech.

What you have created within this city is a fundamental lack of trust in your office. A lack of trust that stems from your comments and reactions to other situations that have arisen. A lack of trust that you will seek the best interests of ALL residents of St. Clairsville. You have stomped on your campaign promise of transparency, by your actions have failed the residents of St. Clairsville, and you have lost the trust of this writer.

I know this is a volatile time within our country, but you can be the instrument of change. You can be the leader that unites and creates a peaceful place to live, work, and grow. Your recent actions have shown the quite the opposite. However, a simple apology may be enough to start things down the right path. A path that you said the city needed – a path of political unity for the best interest of the residents of St. Clairsville.

Thank you,
Matthew Berher