

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**February 16, 2021 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  
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 7:39 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

**MINUTES:** President Velas confirmed all councilmembers received the minutes from the last meeting. Councilman Basile made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2021 Council meeting; motion seconded by Councilman Butler.

**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:** Traveling Clerk, Melanie Smith, reported that Ms. Williams asked for assistance before things got out of control. Ms. Smith was called in to work on bank recs; starting with the Municipal accounts, Rec Center accounts, and General accounts. All bank accounts are reconciled and prepared for the auditor, which will save money. Ms. Smith noticed the City did not have a comprehensive budget or the departments were not involved with the budgeting process. Ms. Smith built a comprehensive budget and met with all department heads to get their input on the budgeting process. Ms. Smith presented to Council a detailed budget package and a detailed debt schedule that will explain things in more detail. Ms. Smith commended the staff for being so cooperative and easy to work with. Ms. Smith gave her background in finance: state auditor for 20 years, director of accounting at a college for 5 years, director of accounting on a development disabilities board for 8 years, director of accounting on a mental health board for 9 years, Buckeye Lake accounting for 1 year, and have taught at multiple colleges for accounting and business.

Councilwoman Jordan asked Ms. Smith how long she has been here; Ms. Smith said it has been periodical since December 2020. Councilwoman Jordan asked if she does other local entities; Ms. Smith stated she has been at Buckeye Lake for the past year. Councilwoman Jordan asked if everything is straightened out financially after she is finished; Ms. Smith said that everything is current but there are some funds that are stagnate that she would like to investigate if Council

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allows it. Councilwoman Jordan asked if it will be easier to receive a detailed list of what checks have been paid out; Ms. Smith stated that it would be with this new system.

Councilman Smith stated the Covid funds required a lot of work and thanked Mr. Smith for her help.

Councilwoman Oprisch stated Ms. Williams was not cross trained at the beginning of the year. Councilwoman Oprisch asked after all the things she has put in place will save them money in the long run; Ms. Smith stated yes, she prepares documents for the auditor to use without a 3<sup>rd</sup> party. Councilwoman Oprisch asked if things needed fixed; Ms. Smith said that lots of things were buried under supplies and materials. The appropriation back sheet will show more information where the money was spent. Councilwoman Oprisch asked that every department head had input on their budget; Ms. Smith stated that she worked with all department heads to work on the budgets and to show where funds are being spent in each department.

Councilman Basile pulled 2018, 2019, and 2020 ledgers and stated nothing was in the memo line, will there be now; Ms. Smith stated that is a practice that should not be carried out. The check should state where that check is going and what is paid for.

Councilman Sabatino asked how much longer the City will be requiring your services; Ms. Smith stated she is finished with 2020 but has a 3 stagnate funds that she would like to investigate if Council allows it; revolving loan, renovations, and community housing. She would like to investigate, see if it can be closed out, and see if the money can be spent other ways. Councilman Sabatino asked if one of these might be the Water Tank fund; Ms. Smith stated no. Councilman Sabatino asked if she was involved with the language in Ordinance 2021-02; Ms. Smith stated that it came out of the village handbook [Ohio Village Officer's Handbook].

**REPORTS: Mayor Kathryn Thalman** read a letter from Carrie Gralinski (attached to minutes). Mayor met with Councilwoman Oprisch and Chief Arbenz to discuss the Youth program, and Chief Arbenz also reports all officers have complete training and state requirements. The Mayor met with Melanie, Annette, and Jeremy to ensure everything will be posted correctly after multiple adjustments; reviewed budget numbers with Councilman Smith. The Mayor, Mr. Basile, and Jeremy met with Belmont County Soil and Water to discuss the lease of the Landscape building [S. Sugar]. Mayor discussed with Mr. Hanley ideas of activities to have at the Rec Center. The Mayor commended Councilwoman Butler for being proactive on road issues and working with the Utilities office. The Mayor and Jeremy met with Jeff Vaughn, Kelly Porter, and the County Commissioners to update information to connect the City to the County water.

Councilman Sabatino asked the status of Mayor's Court and who the Mayor's Court clerk will be; Mayor stated it will be set up the last week of February and Jennifer McMillen. Councilman Sabatino asked if the person who wrote the letter was a City resident; Mayor stated she is a City resident.

**Service /Safety Director Jeremy Greenwood** sent out an email to Council with information on the cold patching and the Durapatcher; any questions please feel free to contact Mr. Greenwood. Mr. Greenwood had several meetings with Jeff Vaughn for the Water Distribution System

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upgrades, several insurance renewal meetings, Belmont County Soil and Water to negotiate leases, and Dave Mertz [Belmont College] for Train Station renovations. Utilities office hired a part-time clerk; Mr. Greenwood welcomed Barb. Mr. Greenwood met with department heads to discuss budgets and potential projects. Belmont County Commissioners, Kelly Porter, and Brian Street updated on the East End Connection and on their water projects scheduled. Upcoming projects include City building and Rec Center restrooms, dam repairs based on monthly inspection, East End Connection, updating administrative policies and procedures, and legislation to hire Superintendent. Electric department are doing service work and trimming trees. Water/Wastewater department are working on water line breaks and jetting the sewers. Street department are working on equipment repairs and snow and ice removal; used about 300 tons of salt in the reserve. Mr. Greenwood commended the Street department for their hard work during the recent snows; reminder to residents to keep your vehicles off the street and to not shove snow into parking spaces. Additional rapid tests have been delivered; no one is currently out sick. The City was awarded Tree City USA for 2020 [21<sup>st</sup> year in this program]. City Council iPads are in, please contact Jenn to pick them up and set up email. I have started Employee of the Month program and have several candidates narrowed down. Council received an email summary regarding Ordinance 2021-04; JB Green Team is discontinuing a few of their programs and adding a new one; anyone who has questions please contact Mr. Greenwood.

Councilwoman Oprisch asked if we can get more salt; Mr. Greenwood said we can order more but it will be at a higher rate of \$150/ton. Councilwoman Oprisch asked if JB Green Team will address Council or the email sent is their correspondence; Mr. Greenwood stated he thinks the email is how they are addressing this. Councilwoman Oprisch asked if we have an idea of the other places that have passed this thus far; Mr. Greenwood stated he will reach out and ask.

Councilwoman Jordan asked the new utility clerk's name; Mr. Greenwood stated Barb and he will forward her resume to Council. Councilwoman Jordan asked why we cannot use the previous software for Mayor's Court; Mr. Greenwood stated it needs updated and will be able to do more with the new system; other local municipalities are using this system. Councilwoman Jordan asked if it would cost more; Mr. Greenwood stated he believes it is an upgrade to our previous system.

Councilman Sabatino is there plan for City-wide paving; Mr. Greenwood stated approximately 150,000 budgeted to the Street department for paving. He is getting quotes for the crack seal to seal newer streets. Councilman Sabatino asked if something can be done to the lot at the Recycling Center due to ice; Mr. Greenwood stated yes, he will speak to the Street Department to take care of the lot. He is looking into getting a V-Box salt spreader and Brine system to help take care of the ice.

**Police Chief Matt Arbenz** reports that the Police department received the 2020 Gold Standard Award. The department has received complaints on trucks using the engine brakes; Chief Arbenz reviewed Ordinance 337.20 and has asked Law Director Elizabeth Glick to revise and clarify the language on engine brakes. Chief Arbenz commended Officer Clark for visiting the City's elderly residents on Valentine's Day. Chief Arbenz thanked the Street department for their hard work during this recent snowstorm.

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**Finance Director Annette Williams** reports she has closed out 2020. Ms. Williams thanked Melanie for assisting her and the cooperation from all departments.

Several Council members commended Ms. Williams for her work to better the City's financial system and for working closely with Ms. Smith.

**Planning & Zoning Administrator Tom Murphy** reports he has met with the owners of Convenient Food Mart and the architects and proposed the City's changes to the parking plan; Convenient Food Mart will adjust plans to proposed changes. Monthly GIS mapping meeting is February 17<sup>th</sup>. The census results have been delayed until September 30, 2021; the City should find out the population between April 30<sup>th</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Councilman Smith asked if the redistricting could be positive or negative for the City; Mr. Murphy says they census workers were very persistent and hopefully we maintain the 5,000 population.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Finance Chair Mike Smith:** Councilman Smith reports that at tonight's Finance meeting 2020 has closed out; expenditures are down 5%, revenues were up 9%, and utilities were up \$377,000 due to past legislation increasing the rates. Mr. Greenwood saved the City 12,000 in liability insurance. Councilman Smith thanked Ms. Melanie for coming in and helping the City.

**Utilities Chair Terra Butler:** Councilwoman Butler reported that they had a special meeting February 11<sup>th</sup> to review policies.

**Police Chair Beth Oprisch:** Councilwoman Oprisch report they had a Police committee meeting February 1<sup>st</sup>. Monthly meetings will now be held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month; next meeting will be March 8<sup>th</sup>. Councilwoman Oprisch and Chief Arbenz had a meeting with Juvenile Court last Friday to discuss funding for the Youth Program. Money is available in the budget to hire another officer. The old cruiser was donated to Belmont Police Department. The department is exploring several things including larger space for the office, dart simulator, drone, and an impound lot.

Councilman Smith stated that ammo has a 500% increase on cost and difficult to find, the training simulator can help save on the cost of ammo.

**Streets – North Side Chair Perry Basile:** Councilman Basile drove the streets and has no update beside the snow removal and winter potholes.

**Streets – South Side Chair Frank Sabatino:** Councilman Sabatino stated he is concerned about road on Rt.9 near Woodrow Ave.

**Safety Chair Frank Sabatino:** Councilman Sabatino reminds all to exercise caution during the cold weather. Do not overload on electric heaters, do not use your stove to heat, and exercise all safety precautions.

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**Building and Grounds Chair Perry Basile:** Councilman Basile stated they are working on the Belmont County Soil and Water project.

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

**Fire Chair Frank Sabatino:** Councilman Sabatino reports that the meeting was February 10<sup>th</sup>. Chief Hall passed out a 23-page 2020 statistical report: 2,376 EMS calls and 776 fire calls. The Fire Board ratified a 3-year contract with Cumberland Trail Firefighters and granted a pay raise for the part-time employees (effective March 2<sup>nd</sup>). Next meeting is Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 3pm.

Councilwoman Oprisch asked if the report is available; Councilman Sabatino stated to contact Chief Hall for a copy of the report. Mr. Greenwood stated he will get the report and for Council to contact him if they want a copy.

**Recreation Chair Linda Jordan:** No report. Next meeting is February 18<sup>th</sup> via zoom.

**Park District Chair Linda Jordan:** No report.

**ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS:** Law Director Elizabeth Glick addressed three pieces of legislation before Council.


**ORDINANCE No. 2021-2:** AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF ST. CLAIRSVILLE, STATE OF OHIO, DURING THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2021, AND DELARING AN EMERGENCY

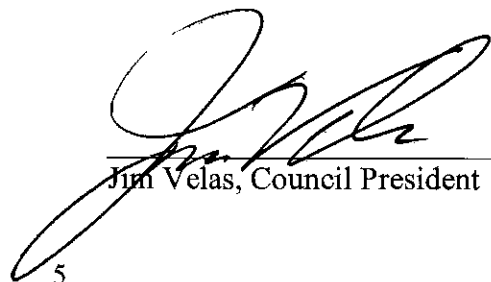
**ORDINANCE No. 2021-3:** AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE INTERFUND TRANSFERS AND REALLOCATIONS WITHIN THE FUNDS FOR THE NORMAL EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF ST. CLAIRSVILLE, STATE OF OHIO, FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2021 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2021, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

**RESOLUTION No. 2021-4:** A RESOLTION APPROVING THE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN OF THE JEFFERSON BELMONT REGIONAL SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

**ADJOURNMENT:** With no further business to come before Council, Councilman Basile made a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:21pm.

Next meeting will be Monday, March 1, 2021 at 7:30pm via teleconference.

  
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Megan Shaw, Council Clerk

  
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Jim Velas, Council President

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Mayor Thalman,

Please feel free to forward this email to the City Council members. In keeping with the wishes of most members and citizens alike, I do NOT want it to be read at the next meeting, therefore wasting even more time on a moot subject. However I would like my feelings known.  
[The Mayor spoke with Ms. Gralinski on February 16<sup>th</sup> and was given permission to read the letter at the Council meeting.]

I was not disturbed by the contents of the citizen's letter read by a member of Council at the 2/1/2021 meeting. As stated, everyone is entitled to their feelings and opinions. What I was disturbed by is that it was read by a member who now seems to be demonstrating an obvious personal dislike for you, and who clearly has some sort of personal vendetta and/or political axe to grind. I'm perplexed by this transparent behavior and quite frankly, I find it appallingly juvenile. THIS is precisely what fans flames—NOT the political commentary itself. I was quite disgusted by that bit of political theater, and I applaud the remaining members who objected and refuse discuss the matter further. THANK YOU!

You have proven to me to be a fearless and tireless fighter for our City, which is exactly what we need! You have my total and complete respect and trust—as does Terra Butler. I am so pleased to be represented by you in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward!

Thank you Mayor, and members of Council, for your time.

Carrie Gralinski