

ATHENS CITY COUNCIL: REGULAR SESSION, MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2020, 7:00 P.M.

Athens City Council met in Regular Session at the above hour. Due to concerns with COVID-19 the following members met via videoconference: Clodfelter, Crowl, Fahl, Kotses, Grace, Risner and Smedley.

Also present via videoconference: President Knisely, Mayor Patterson, Interim Service-Safety Director Pyle, Law Director Eliason, and Auditor Hecht.

REAPPOINT CLERK OF COUNCIL:

Clodfelter moved to reappoint Debra Walker as Clerk of Council after her July 31, 2020 retirement and return to work on August 1, 2020; Grace seconded. Reappointment was approved unanimously.

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:

Grace moved approval of the minutes from the Regular Session of Council held on June 15, 2020 and the Special Sessions held on June 22 and July 13, 2020; Risner seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Council Member Smedley thanked all those who helped with the mask PSA project. Along with City public officials and staff, over 30 members in the community volunteered to participate.

Clodfelter asked where the mask PSA can be accessed.

Smedley responded that it is being shown on The Government Channel and shared on YouTube and Facebook, and is actually a series of several PSAs.

Council Member Kotses reminded the public that the annual street paving is underway beginning tomorrow with the Richland Avenue roundabout.

Council Member Crowl announced a meeting of the Environment & Sustainability Commission on Wednesday, August 5, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. These meetings will continue to be held monthly via Zoom in the immediate future on the first Wednesday of the month.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mayor Patterson announced the following:

- Columbus Circle, southern entrance, will be closed to traffic for street repair tomorrow through Friday, August 7th.
- A Columbia Gas payment assistance program is available to customers having difficulty meeting their monthly bill by calling 800-344-4077, or messaging Columbia Gas on Facebook or Twitter.

- Athens County will be hosting a free COVID-19 pop-up testing site through the Ohio Department of Health from 1-6 p.m., August 7, at Athens High School. Anyone can get this no cost test. No appointment is necessary nor health care provider referral.

Clodfelter asked if those wanting to be tested need to be showing symptoms.

Mayor Patterson noted that the information he has does not indicate that symptoms must be present to receive the test.

- Stressed to Governor DeWine the need for free pop-up testing sites within the City upon return of Ohio University students to campus on August 24th.
- Safety Day was canceled this year due to COVID-19, however, City staff have been asked to remember and honor former employee Mike Stanley who lost his life while on duty.
- Reminded everyone to complete their census.

Auditor Hecht reminded Council that the City is currently being audited by the State, and that it will continue through August 31st.

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING:

0-86-20

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 78-20, AMENDING THE 2020 APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE. Crawl moved for Suspension of the Rules in order to allow Municipal Court to expend the grant funds received from the Ohio Supreme Court; Clodfelter seconded. Suspension of the Rules was approved unanimously. Crawl moved for Adoption; Risner seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

0-87-20

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2020 APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE; AND AUTHORIZING THE AUDITOR TO MAKE INTERFUND TRANSFERS. Crawl moved for Suspension of the Rules in order to allow the Auditor to transfer the funds for current expenditures; Smedley seconded. Suspension of the Rules was approved unanimously. Crawl moved for Adoption; Kotses seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

0-88-20

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE OF \$283,300 OF NOTES BY THE CITY OF ATHENS, OHIO, IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF RENEWING NOTES PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO PAY PART OF THE COSTS OF IMPROVEMENTS TO THIS MUNICIPALITY'S SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

0-89-20

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE PAYMENT OF A PRIOR YEAR EXPENSE; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Crowl moved for Suspension of the Rules in order to pay this past due amount; Grace seconded. Suspension of the Rules was approved unanimously. Crowl moved for Adoption; Clodfelter seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

0-90-20

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 51-20 AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT FOR CONSTRUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING OF THE RETAINING WALL AND REPAIR OF THE COLUMBIA AVENUE SEWER PROJECT (#325). Grace moved for Suspension of the Rules in order to prevent a work stoppage on this project; Clodfelter seconded. Suspension of the Rules was approved unanimously. Grace moved for Adoption; Kotses seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

0-91-20

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF ATHENS AND OHIO UNIVERSITY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER BUSINESS:

Crowl moved to reappoint Aimee Delach to serve an additional term on the Environment & Sustainability Commission; Clodfelter seconded. Reappointment was approved unanimously.

Smedley moved to appoint Clair Gysegem to the Commission on Disabilities; Grace seconded. Appointment was approved unanimously.

Clodfelter moved to confirm the Mayor's appointment of Mark Snider to the Historic Preservation Commission; Fahl seconded. Appointment was approved unanimously.

Kotses moved the appointments of Dawn McCarthy and Micah McCarey to the Community Relations Commission; Grace seconded. Appointments were approved unanimously.

Risner moved to Accept the Auditor's June, 2020, Financial Reports; Smedley seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

Grace moved to Accept the May and June, 2020, Credit Card Transactions; Kotses seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At approximately 8:45 p.m. Clodfelter moved to go into Executive Session to discuss Collective Bargaining, and invited the Mayor, Interim Service-Safety Director, Auditor, and Law Director to attend; Grace seconded. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Smedley, aye; Risner, aye; Crawl, aye; Fahl, aye; Kotses, aye; Grace, aye; and Clodfelter, aye.

At approximately 9:10 p.m., Crawl moved to come out of Executive Session; Grace seconded. Motion was approved unanimously. The Regular Session was reconvened and Fahl moved to adjourn the meeting; Grace seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

President of Council

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

MINUTES
CITY & SAFETY SERVICES COMMITTEE
AUGUST 3, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Sarah Grace, Chair
Chris Fahl, Vice-Chair
Beth Clodfelter, Member

Administrators and
Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Interim Service-Safety Director Pyle
Auditor Hecht
Law Director Eliason

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- 0-51-20 (amend)
 - Grace – authorization of \$75,000 is needed for a construction and construction engineering change order associated with the Columbia Avenue Retaining Wall and Sewer Line Repair Project – the design engineering firm underestimated the cost of materials – FEMA reimbursement has been approved to cover 87 ½% of the cost of this project
 - Kotses – asked if additional funds were needed to pay for easements
 - IS-S Director – temporary easements were secured
 - Law Director – one permanent easement was needed off Madison
 - Crowl – questioned whether the rip rap at a Columbus Road site was going to be used as fill for this project
 - IS-S Director – yes, part of the cost mitigation was due to using our own rip rap
 - Crowl – appreciates that the City salvaged this concrete and is finding ways to repurpose it instead of sending it to the landfill
 - Mayor – recalls that the rip rap came from East State Street improvements – has been used to armor the Columbus Road Bike Path Spur and eroding bank on the Hocking River
 - Risner – asked, with FEMA reimbursement, the final cost of this project
 - Grace – if reimbursement is received on the total cost, the part not being reimbursed is \$60,750, if not, \$126,375
 - IS-S Director – the City will be filing a claim with the design engineer's insurance carrier

- APD Mutual Aid Agreement
 - Grace – it is time to renew our mutual aid agreement with Ohio University Law Enforcement
 - IS-S Director – mutual aid agreements have been in place since as early as 1972
 - Smedley – asked if this agreement is any different than earlier agreements
 - IS-S Director – improved formatting, substance has not changed since 2012

ITEMS NEEDED ON THE NEXT CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Mutual Aid

MINUTES: AUGUST 3, 2020
FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Sam Crawl, Chair
Jeff Risner, Vice-Chair
Peter Kotses, Member
Arian Smedley, Member

Administrators and/or

Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Interim Service-Safety Director Pyle
Auditor Hecht
Law Director Eliason

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- 0-78-20 (amend fund lines)
-Crowl – the fund lines in 0-78-20 were incorrect and need to be changed from the Clerk of Computer Fund, 231, to General Fund, Municipal Court, 101.106, in the amount of \$5,380, and to Court Capital Fund, 592.106, in the amount of \$29,650
- Appropriations/Transfers
-Crowl – need to transfer \$176,700 from Sewer Fund, 750, to Sewer Debt Fund, 758, and \$20,000 from APR Income Tax Fund, 273 to Community Center Fund, 271
- Note Rollover
-Crowl – City will pay \$176,700 for sanitary sewer system improvements and rollover \$283,300 at 0.69% interest
- Utility Bills (assistance)
-Crowl – this is a program that will be sponsored by HAPCAP – interested community members can make donations directly to HAPCAP to assist with those unable to pay their City utility bill due to COVID-19
- Assistant Director of Public Works (new hire)
-Crowl – the Director of EPW would like to hire into this position – it has been vacant since March, 2019 – starting annual salary is \$54,954 with an additional 30% in benefits – funding for this position is split among the water, sewer and street funds

-Auditor – does not recommend filling this position

-Risner – expressed concern about hiring into the position at this time – revenues are flat and expenses are not – this is a time we ask everyone to do more with less – he fears even tighter budget constraints in the upcoming months due to COVID-19 – given our financial situation he does not see an emergency need to fill this position

-Smedley – asked why the Auditor does not recommend filling this position

-Auditor – this position has not been filled for a year and a half – sewer funds are limited and the street fund is showing a loss of revenue – suggested possibly reorganizing the department

-Kotses – currently not a good time to be hiring into a position that has been vacant for this long

-IS-S Director – while the need for the position is justified, he can understand the trepidation at this time due to financial concerns

-Auditor – clarified that with benefits this position will cost the City over \$70,000 annually – would feel more comfortable waiting

-Fahl – agrees with Risner and Kotses that the timing is wrong

-Grace – is aware of the many hours the Director is working and would hope a different solution might be available to assist him

-Clodfelter – this is an uncertain time for City financials – would be prudent to wait

-Mayor – given the expertise and workload of the Director and Assistant Engineer there really needs to be some level of relief, but he too understands the City's budget uncertainty at this time

- United Senior (lease extension)

-Crowl – Administration would like to extend the current leased space at the Community Center through July 31, 2021

-Risner – asked if any of the CARES Act funds can be used to assist the United Seniors Program

-Mayor – yes, the City can provide a grant to United Seniors – a need being explored is to provide online connectivity with members of United Seniors possibly through tablets and hotspots

-Clodfelter – such a grant would be very beneficial

- Prior Year Bill (APD)
 - Crowl – this is a September 2019 bill from IPS Group, Inc. for the City’s parking technology and related services in the amount of (\$6,357.86) and will be paid from General Fund, Parking Enforcement
 - Kotses – asked about parking revenue at this time due to COVID-19
 - Mayor – as expected, the revenue is down significantly
 - IS-S Director – revenue could be down as much as 50% (\$300,000-\$400,000) by the end of the year from both parking meters and citations – added, notification of the past due bill was just received by the department
- CARES Act
 - Crowl – the City would like to offer rent/mortgage emergency relief through a grant to HAPCAP to administer \$25,000 for those residents facing eviction or mortgage default due to the pandemic – an applicant can receive a one-month payment of up to \$1000 – again, the program is designed for those unable to pay housing related costs from this crisis – must be a resident of the City, provide documentation of hardship due to the COVID-19 crisis, and documentation of past due rent/mortgage payment
 - Clodfelter – asked if additional money could be added if demand dictates
 - Mayor – yes
 - Risner – asked about oversight
 - Mayor – will request weekly updates from HAPCAP – he will keep Council Members apprised

ITEMS NEEDED ON THE NEXT CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

- 1.** Senior Lease Extension
- 2.** Cares Act