

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Meeting

Meeting

BARRETT BROTHERS - DAYTON, OHIO

Form 6101

Held

Monday, July 9, 2018

Videos and minutes of council meetings are available to the public to view online at www.vermilion.net under meeting videos/minutes.

Vermilion City Council: Steve Herron, Council President; Monica Stark, Council at Large; Frank Loucka, Ward Two; Steve Holovacs, Ward Three; Barb Brady, Ward Four; G. Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk. Absent: Brian Holmes, Ward Five; John Gabriel, Ward One

Administrative Staff: Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Susan Anderson, Attorney

CALL TO ORDER:

Steve Herron, President of Council called the Monday, July 9, 2018, Vermilion City Council Meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The members of Council, administrative staff, and audience participants recited the Pledge of Allegiance; a moment of silence followed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

S. Holovacs MOVED: F. Loucka seconded to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2018 meeting. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

CORRESPONDENCE:

G. Fisher reported she received a liquor permit from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control for Sloopy's Pizza Vermilion LLC, 4503 Liberty Avenue.

Secondly, she read into the record an email received by Thomas Chufar dated June 28, 2018, pertaining to concerns he has for the safety and welfare of the City of Vermilion employees upon the reveal of both operations and equipment he viewed during the guided tour of the Vermilion Service Center on June 25. This email is on file in the clerk's office for inspection.

Additionally, she received a letter dated June 27, 2018, from Mayor Forthofer noting the resignation of Jim Schoene to his position on the Stormwater Advisory Committee. Following was another letter appointing Jim Schoene to serve on the Parks and Recreation Board to fill the unexpired term of Johnathan Logue. Mayor Forthofer also submitted a letter to council on July 9, 2018, recommending the appointment of Kris Horton to the Stormwater Advisory Committee to replace Jim Schoene.

PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL'S REPORT: No report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Historic Design & Review Board:

The next meeting has been scheduled for July 10, 2018 at 6:00 pm.

Planning Commission:

The next meeting has been scheduled for July 10, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

Streets, Buildings and Grounds Committee:

F. Loucka reported on the meeting held June 25. The next meeting has been scheduled for July 16, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

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Port Authority:

F. Loucka reported on the meeting held June 14. The next meeting has been scheduled for July 12, 2018 at 6:30 pm.

Utilities Committee:

S. Holovacs reported the next meeting has been scheduled for July 16, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

Contractors Registration Board of Examiners:

S. Holovacs reported on the meeting held June 26. The next meeting has been scheduled for July 24, 2018 at 6:00 pm.

Finance Committee:

The next meeting has been scheduled for July 16, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

Parks & Recreation:

The next meeting has been scheduled for July 17, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

Tree Commission:

S. Herron reported the next meeting has been scheduled for July 11, 2018 at 7:00 pm at Ritter Public Library.

Legislative Committee:

M. Stark reported the next meeting has been scheduled for July 16, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

Vermilion Community Services Board:

M. Stark reported the next meeting has been scheduled for July 18, 2018 at 6:30 pm at Ritter Public Library.

Health & Safety Committee:

B. Brady reported the next meeting has been scheduled for July 16, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

Board of Zoning Appeals:

B. Brady reported the next meeting has been scheduled for July 24, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

MAYOR/SAFETY DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Forthofer reported that State Representative Steve Arndt will hold a Vermilion Town Hall meeting on July 16, 2018, at 6:00 pm in the Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street. Representative Arndt represents Ottawa and Erie Counties. This meeting is open to the public and questions can be entertained by the public at that time.

He reported on another successful Safety Town that concluded on June 22. Safety Town is not a babysitting event and the safety forces and volunteers are very serious about teaching safety to our youngest residents. It's one of the only two-week programs remaining in the area. He extended congratulations to the Vermilion Police Department, Vermilion Fire Department and all the volunteers who ran this important program, particularly Chrystal Deverick who has completed her 15th and final year.

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With regards to economic development, Mayor Forthofer noted that Defense Soap and Owner Guy Sako is full speed ahead with preparations to build their headquarters on Liberty Avenue on the land next to 3330 Liberty. The necessary lot split and site plan is expected to be before the Planning Commission in August.

He also noted that Ed's Equipment and Owner Ed Urbanek is currently going through the required ODNR Wetlands Study. Ed's Equipment is also expected to go before the Planning Commission in August.

Additionally, he mentioned a new prospect he is currently working with, but couldn't share any additional information at this time.

He stated the common denominator among those businesses that have chosen Vermilion is that they say they are impressed by the responsiveness of City Hall. The 'we want you here' is an attitude that has been adopted by all City Hall employees and it works.

With reporting good news for Liberty Avenue, Mayor Forthofer was pleased to announce that at the June 27, Lorain County Commissioner's Meeting a Corridor Study was announced for Vermilion's Rt. 6 Corridor. This is a \$35,000 grant. County Engineer Don Romancak has hired M.S. Consultants to perform the study. County Community Development Director Jerry Good will help guide the study. The study will do three things: Survey and analyze Vermilion's Rt. 6 from the city entrance on the east end to the county line. Recommend changes that will facilitate better use of the corridor for residential, industrial, and retail performance. Thirdly, they will research funding sources to implement the plan.

Mayor Forthofer stated he has initiated a phone study at City Hall. Complaints of unanswered phones are frequent. He said he has never observed a City Hall employee not answering a phone unless otherwise engaged with another phone call or a resident at the window. Friday, the Utilities department had 263 people at the window and 60 phone messages. One person and a part time helper were working. Everyone including him returns all messages by the end of the day except Utilities when they have 60 messages. They are bringing in a Century Tel business consultant to review the current system. An overhaul of the Utilities payment system is another review in progress. He said they have 10,000 people to serve and six sets of ears. He and City Hall employees had a meeting to deal with this difficult CRM issue. The goal is to enable City Hall workers to be responsive to everyone who calls.

Lastly, he reported that Republic Services Representative Dave Kidder asked for a meeting and reviewed the same issues as he brought to Council a month ago pertaining to the negative conditions facing his industry. Mr. Kidder is asking for a voluntary increase of \$1.03 per Vermilion household for refuse collection beginning in October to deal with the deficit the collection center is experiencing. There was a contracted increase of \$.48 this past May of 2018. The contract runs through April of 2020 with no further scheduled increases. He noted his plan is to decline.

SERVICE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

T. Valerius reported that on June 29, he met with representatives from K.E. McCartney and the Ohio Department of Transportation to perform an inspection of the new traffic light system. After lengthy discussions at several of the lights to try to resolve timing and safety issues, it was evident that a few changes needed to be made. At the Liberty/Main intersection the wait time will be reduced by 12 seconds to help prevent vehicles from backing up to the tracks. At the Liberty/Sandusky/West River intersection the lights will be retimed, so whichever way you're traveling on Liberty the first light will turn red before the second in order to clear the small area in between the lights so the side street traffic has a place to go. Also, two signs will be installed for traffic turning on to eastbound Liberty from West River to warn them of pedestrians in the walkway. There will also be some 'to be determined' timing changes at the Liberty/Salem intersection as there's an issue that needs some more investigation.

He reported the city has received calls regarding unlit street lights, so he reviewed the policy with the citizens by letting everyone know that if they observe unlit street lights they can call or email him or the Mayor's office and give them the location of the light by street address or provide them with the strap number which is located on the pole and they will contact Ohio Edison to report the outage. The bulb will be changed in a minimal amount of time. Tony Valerius (204-2424) tonyvalerius@vermilion.net; Anne Maiden (204-2402) annemaiden@vermilion.net.

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B. Brady asked if the Overlook intersection light timing would be addressed and T. Valerius said it seems to be okay. B. Brady asked if there was a sensor in the street and T. Valerius said it's an overhead sensor. B. Brady said it's a long light and traffic was backed up to the railroad tracks recently around 7:30 a.m. T. Valerius said the objection of the street timing change is to keep the traffic moving on Liberty. He said they can review the timing on Overlook again.

F. Loucka said a resident has expressed to him that there is at least 10 lights out on Liberty Avenue and he's hesitant to stop on a highway to find a tag, so if there are that many isn't this something the city or the police department who patrols 24 hours a day can stop and peg them as they drive by. He said this extends from the Farm Market to Vermilion Road. T. Valerius said he came into town about a week and a half ago during the evening and he drove limit to limit and there were 18 lights that were out, so he will write this down and forward it to Ohio Edison. In the future, he will get the police department's help in getting some of these lights taken care of when they see that they are out. F. Loucka asked if the city's mower is back in operation and T. Valerius reported it is.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Amy Hendricks reported the month end financial reports for May 31, 2018, have been distributed to council for review. She has been working on mid-year revenue and expense detailed analysis to be able to recommend any changes that need made. Preliminary June 30 fund balances for the enterprise funds were mailed Friday to Council.

She noted the 2017 Audit resumed today and will be completed before the end of the month. They have three auditors on site, so they are busy keeping the paperwork moving to them.

With regards to email direct deposit notices, they are continuing to tweak processes. She sent out an email following the last June payroll offering the option to employees to use the email version of the direct deposit notification. She had some volunteers who had offered to test it out, so they knew it was working well as long as the employee were using their city assigned email addresses. They had 30 new people sign up and have eliminated the paper notices for the few employees who had been receiving both previously. This is about 40 less total reports that had to be printed, stuffed in envelopes and distributed each pay.

She reported there is an ordinance placed on the agenda on an emergency basis to approve transfers between funds of cash to support appropriations. These were a part of the initial 2018 budget that had been discussed, but not itemized in funds other than the General Fund appropriation ordinance. For audit purposes, she wants to be sure these were specified.

She noted that Councilwoman Monica Stark made her aware of two listings of payments to the City on the unclaimed funds registry. They are cashier's checks for \$100 (likely fee payments). She submitted the claim forms to the State of Ohio.

Also, the City is currently carrying outstanding checks on the books as far back as 2012 that have never been accounted for per the Auditor of State guidelines. An ordinance will be placed on the next Council agenda to establish Fund 850 Unclaimed Funds so the process of clearing those transactions can begin.

She reported the second reading of the 2019 Tax Budget is on the agenda. This is an estimated budget for the County Budget Commission (more of a projection) to demonstrate necessity for the collection of taxes levied and paid. This does not grant spending authority. Expenditures are estimated at 2018 levels for many categories, including all personnel, to be able to balance the budget. The Tax Budget hearing will be held prior to the committee meetings on July 16.

She explained the city's fringe benefit plans are estimated to cost the City over \$1.6 million in 2018. In 2017, the cost per employee per medical only was more than 1.5 times the national average. The current plan has been in place for a number of years and needs a complete evaluation. This is not a project that they have internal resources and expertise to conduct in a timely manner. An outside set of eyes to research and negotiate on behalf of the city is critical to obtaining the best value for taxpayers and employees. She along with the mayor and a couple council representatives from the insurance committee met with multiple firms over the last month and has selected NFP, Inc. They are a national firm with a

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regional office located in Independence. They have a large public sector book of business in Ohio covering cities, counties and school districts. Their first step is to do a complete analysis of the current situation to assure that any recommendations made will have a positive impact. One of the valuable services they offer is working with employees during negotiations as well as ongoing insurance committee interaction to keep everyone informed.

The fee structure is performance based on 10% of projected savings capped at \$30,000 (\$300,000 annual savings) if their recommendations are implemented. If the City elects not to implement the recommendations the fee is hourly not to exceed \$15,000. The agreements are under review with legal counsel.

B. Brady asked if there will be recommendations in changing the city's current insurance provider or are they looking at a provider they would manage. A. Hendricks said if they would recommend that the city obtain proposals for claims administration (third party administrators) like what BAC is currently doing, they would put together a proposal of what those needs are and would solicit pricing from multiple sources. They will look at everything within the plan to see where there are opportunities.

S. Holovacs asked if council needs to email her if they want to receive their paystubs via email. A. Hendricks said the only situation they have with the email direct deposits at this point is that it needs to be an email within the city network. If a council member wants to send over their personal email they can try it to see what happens. M. Stark asked if it's in the negotiated contracts that they would provide the employees a paystub; is this why they just don't implement the process for all city employees like a lot of businesses do. A. Hendricks said there isn't anything that prohibits them from doing this, but she understands there is some significant reluctance among the staff, so at some point they may reach a place where they move forward in this direction, but for now she is doing this as a soft opening. She has received contact from every department interested in this process. One supervisor came in last week to pick up the department's paystubs and there was only one for his department as everyone else was emailed. M. Stark said anymore the way most businesses communicate with their employees is through email, so the majority of the employees are used to checking their emails because of work related things.

CITY ENGINEER'S REPORT:

C. Howard updated Council on the progress of the Highbridge Road Bridge construction. He reported that three of the five beams were installed across the railroad tracks and with limited track availability and timing they are hoping to finish this week. Once they are done with this they are scheduled to pour the wing walls and abutments. He noted there was an accident yesterday on site when they were lining a beam for cross bracing installation as the scaffolding that was holding two ironworkers gave out. They were wearing harnesses but they suffered minor injuries. B. Brady asked if this is a contractor's responsibility and C. Howard concurred.

F. Loucka asked if the railroad has taken care of the issue of moving the CEI pole. C. Howard said the pole has been removed as it had to be done before the beams could be installed.

M. Stark asked if the projected completion date of the bridge is still on target and C. Howard said it's still on schedule.

LAW DIRECTOR'S REPORT: No report.

OPEN TO THE AUDIENCE:

Thomas Chufar of 4373 Edgewater Drive said most of them toured the service center and frankly he was surprised to not hear any comments about safety issues or hazards. He said the city needs to take some classes and find out what safety and health issues are with facilities. There is a huge responsibility. They keep hearing about the budget, budget, budget, budget! The best abilities look very good because they have very organized closets where the works starts. That's where the janitor is; that's what that building is. They are not seeing that here in Vermillion. They went through a building that frankly looks nice on the outside, but when you go inside there are a lot of bad things. Once again, if the city didn't see them, then take a safety class. I have taken many. He told council and the administration to get their eyes open and see what's going on. He said he is trying to be helpful to the city. He's not trying to be the bad person,

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but it's like when you have a clue of what's coming and the coach can tell you that the guy is throwing a curve in the outside and you can hit it; hit the thing; step into it. He said he isn't being a wet blanket but is trying to give the city a little information; trying to help the city out. He said the city has trucks with broken belts in the tires; these are out on the road. Would you do that in a police cruiser? Would you let a fire truck? Floors out of vehicles; wheels that are actually rusting almost through on dump trucks. These are huge ODOT problems; the city has big equipment and a big responsibility; lots of people on the road. It gets to be a big town in the summer time, but it's more than that because everybody on the road deserves to know that every vehicle the City of Vermilion puts out on the road is safe, so do the employees. He asked why the street sign is still missing at the corner of Douglas and Devon. T. Valerius said a sign was ordered. T. Chufar said it's a lot less expensive to make the signs in house. He said Vermilion is a great place and he told the city to not get complacent!

NEW BUSINESS:

S. Herron MOVED; F. Loucka seconded to adjourn into executive session after the reading of the ordinances to discuss personnel matters involving hiring and firing. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

S. Holovacs MOVED; F. Loucka seconded to approve the Mayor's appointment of Kris Horton to the Stormwater Advisory Committee to fill the unexpired term of Jim Schoene. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

S. Holovacs MOVED; F. Loucka seconded to approve the Mayor's appointment of Jim Schoene to the Parks and Recreation Board to fill the unexpired term of Jon Logue. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

READING OF ORDINANCES:

Second Reading – Ordinance 2018-39: AN ORDINANCE TO OFFICIALLY SUPPLEMENT THE MINIMUM CONTRACTUAL SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED BY BRAMHALL ENGINEERING & SURVEYING COMPANY BY VIRTUE OF ORDINANCE 2018-5 ADOPTED JANUARY 2, 2018, BY AUTHORIZING PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING AND SURVEYING SERVICES RELATED TO THE VERMILION ROAD REHABILITATION PHASE 2 PID 100432 PROJECT; PRESCRIBING THAT THE FIRM SHALL BE PAID FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RATE SCHEDULE SET FORTH IN THE PROPOSAL DATED JUNE 8, 2018, IN A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED SEVENTY SIX THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS(\$76,400.00), AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Second Reading – Ordinance 2018-40: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 1042.05 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF VERMILION, OHIO ENTITLED "USE OF PUBLIC SEWERS", AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. (Referred to July 16, Legislative Meeting)

First Reading – Ordinance 2018-41: AN ORDINANCE TRANSFERRING FUNDS FROM ONE APPROPRIATION TO ANOTHER AND/OR APPROPRIATING FUNDS NOT HERETOFORE APPROPRIATED.

S. Holovacs MOVED; M. Stark seconded to suspend the rules. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

B. Brady MOVED; S. Herron seconded to adopt this ordinance by emergency. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Second Reading – Resolution 2018R-6: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE 2019 TAX BUDGET AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. (Public Hearing – July 16, 2018 @ 7:00 pm)

Announcement of Meeting Dates

July 16, 2018 – Town Hall Meeting – State Representative Steve Arndt – 6pm followed by Vermilion City Council Public Hearing – 2019 Tax Budget @ 7:00 pm and followed by City Council Committee Meetings (All)

July 23, 2018 – Vermilion City Council Meeting – 7:00 pm

July 30, 2018 – No meeting

August 6, 2018 – Vermilion City Council Meeting – 7:00 pm

August 13, 2018 – Vermilion City Council Committee Meetings (All) – 7:00 pm

August 20 & August 27 – Council Summer Break – No meetings

September 3, 2018 – Labor Day – City Offices Closed – No meeting

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B. Brady noted for the public's awareness that the topics of Food Trucks and the Parks Levy will be discussed at the July 16, committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon no further business coming before the body at the conclusion of executive session, Steve Herron, President of Council adjourned the Vermilion City Council meeting.

Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk