

MINUTES OF LIMA CITY COUNCIL
LIMA, OHIO

April 25, 2022

The Council of the City of Lima met in regular session at 7:00 p.m.

Attending were: Mayor Sharetta Smith; Tony Geiger, Law Director; Randall Bartels, Auditor; Steven Cleaves, Finance Director; Susan Crotty; Dir. Of DCD; Mike Caprella, Dir. of Util.; Kirk Niemeyer, Dir. of Public Works; Police Major Ron Holman; and Dana Addis, Clerk.

The invocation was given by Councilor Neeper followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL showed the following members present: Gordon, Wilkerson, Thompson, Ehora, Glenn, Neeper and Nixon. Absent: Dixon.

Gordon moved, seconded by Glenn, to amend the Agenda by adding Todd Sterling, Robert Devita, Mitch Monfort and Michelle Monfort to Privilege of the Floor and Communication #7. Motion carried.

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS PRESENTED:

006-22 A Resolution Memorializing the late Lois Rubens, outstanding citizen, and extending condolences to her family on behalf of the Lima City Council. Ehora moved, seconded by Glenn, that the Resolution be adopted on the first reading after being read. The Clerk read the Resolution. Councilor Ehora expressed her condolences to the Rubens family. She explained Lois was a class act and was lovely inside and out. She recalled back to when she met Lois through Allen Lima Leadership. The following vote was recorded on the motion: Yea, 7; Gordon, Wilkerson, Thompson, Ehora, Glenn, Neeper and Nixon. Nay, none. The Chair declared the motion carried and the resolution was adopted on the first reading by a 7-0 vote. Jeff Rubens thanked Council for the acknowledgement and explained his mother loved Lima.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Ashley Cook, 2100 Bentz Road; Megan Fisher, 512 E. Main Street, Cridersville; and Dennis Hempker, 2100 Bentz Road. Megan Fisher advised she is the founder and CEO of Voices of Prosperity which is a non-profit with the goal to empower children, teens and adults with access to personal well-being through creativity. She announced the formal coming together of the Lima Mural Project and Voices of Prosperity. Dennis Hempker explained there is a total solar eclipse in 2024 which will come through Lima, Ohio bringing a large amount of people to the area. He further explained the purpose of the collaboration is to beautify and shift the perception of Lima. Ashley Cook expressed her excitement to expand and grow with Voices of Prosperity. Megan Fisher explained they are looking to do one or two murals in the community and are hoping to get some feedback from Council and the citizens with regards to where they would like to see a mural.

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John Walters, 1285 Winterberry Drive, represents approximately 300 pickle ball players in the local area. He explained pickle ball is currently the fastest growing sport in the nation because it can be played by all age groups and is easy to learn. He asked Council to consider creating outside venues for pickle ball players. He advised tennis courts are the most logical location as you can hold two pickle ball courts on one tennis court, but painted lines are needed in order to play. He explained pickle ball brings health and exercise to the community and explained if enough courts were provided, the City could hold pickle ball tournaments, bringing players from the surrounding areas. He further explained they are currently holding pickle ball classes at Heir Force Academy, Bluffton Schools and are planning to offer classes to Lima City Schools next year. He invited Council to play pickle ball and advised they are currently playing at the YMCA weekday mornings and also at Westwood Tennis Club for a short time.

Todd Sterling was not present to speak.

Robert Devita, 519 Fairfield Drive, referenced an Art Show held at Somewhere In Time and presented a painting with the quote “roar, dream big and speak out” which he believes fits what he hopes to do in the future. He expressed the need to review the charter to address the Police Chief position. He explained it is cool that everyone has listened to his input whether they have agreed with it or not. He doesn’t believe the City is putting enough emphasis on lowering the crime rate.

Mitch Monfort, 1000 Loretta Place, advised Councilor Neeper is his Council person and neighbor. He explained that his mother in law recently passed away and his wife inherited his car of which they parked on the street. He proceeded to explain events leading up to the police being called by Councilor Neeper reporting the car abandoned or stolen. Mr. Monfort further advised that after he had made arrangements with the Police Dept. for him to move the car at a later time, Councilor Neeper called to have the vehicle impounded. He expressed his concern with how he was treated by Councilor Neeper and expected a more appropriate and respectful behavior out of Mr. Neeper.

Michelle Monfort, 1000 Loretta Place, recounted the events that took place leading up to the police being called to have her mother’s vehicle impounded. She suggested that Mr. Neeper’s concern was not that the car was stolen or abandoned, but rather the aesthetics of the vehicle did not match the neighborhood and Mr. Neeper was asserting his authority. She explained they will keep the vehicle off of the street, if it cannot be parked there. He further explained her main concern is the behavior of Mr. Neeper and expects more empathy and compassion out of Mr. Neeper as he is in the funeral home industry. Councilor Neeper apologized for not calling them to find out whose car it was. He explained he did not insist on the car being towed and further explained the vehicle had not been removed after three days as they were advised. He said the vehicle looked to be abandoned with half flat tires and no license plate and Mr. Hart told him it needed to be off of the street. He expressed his willingness to sit down with them and Sgt. Hart to talk about what he was told about the situation.

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THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE PRESENTED ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR:

- a. Minutes of the previous meeting not read since each received a copy;
- b. Minutes of the Special Council meeting on April 18, 2022;
- c. Treasurer's Report for March, 2022;
- d. Board of Health Minutes of March 11, 2022.

Gordon moved that item "a and b" of the consent calendar be received, filed, and approved, and items "c and d" be received and filed, seconded by Neeper. Councilor Thompson exited Chambers at 7:29 p.m. The motion on the floor carried 6-0.

Councilor Thompson arrived back into Chambers at 7:30 p.m.

THE FOLLOWING COMMUNICATIONS WERE PRESENTED:

1. From the Civil Service Board Secretary regarding an amended pay range for the Utilities Operations Manager.
2. From the Finance Dir. regarding legislation to amend the 2022 budget.
3. From the Chief of Police regarding legislation to enter into contract with Motorola Solutions.
4. From the Dir. of Public Works regarding legislation to purchase 122 North Elizabeth Street.
5. From the Acting City Engineer regarding legislation to amend a contract with Cotterman Roofing, Inc. as authorized in Ord. 271-21.
6. From the Auditor regarding the March 2022 financial reports.
7. From the Dep. Dir. of Parks, Recreation and Forestry regarding legislation to authorize the Mayor to receive a gift from All Phase Electric and Electrical Systems Technology Group at Apollo JVS.

Councilor Gordon moved, seconded by Glenn, that Communications No. 1 through 7 be received, filed, approved and authorize the Law Dir. to prepare any necessary legislation. Motion carried.

PETITIONS:

Petition for the re-zoning of the N/E corner of the intersection between Eureka Street and Calumet Avenue – Petitioned for by Michael Blass, Creating Comfort Rentals Gordon moved, seconded by Wilkerson, that the petition be received and filed; that the Law Director prepare the necessary legislation; that the Clerk cause publication of the legal ad and notify abutting property owners of the Public Hearing to be held on June 13, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. Motion carried.

Petition for the vacation of an alley between Dewey Ave. and Perry Street – Petitioned for by J. Grant Neal, North Park Community Church. Thompson moved, seconded by Glenn, that the petition be received and filed; that the Law Director prepare the necessary legislation; that the Clerk cause publication of the legal ad and notify abutting property owners of the Public Hearing to be held on June 13, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. Motion carried.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:

Councilor Wilkerson moved, seconded by Glenn, that the Human Resources Committee Report of April 18, 2022 be received, filed and approved. Motion carried.

THE FOLLOWING ORDINANCES WERE PRESENTED:

109-22 An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into contract to purchase property on North Elizabeth Street. Ehora moved, seconded by Thompson, that the ordinance be passed on the first reading. The following vote was recorded on the motion. Yea, 7; Gordon, Wilkerson, Thompson, Ehora, Glenn, Neeper and Nixon. Nay, none. The Chair declared the motion carried and the ordinance passes on the first reading by a 7-0 vote.

110-22 An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into contract with Motorola Solutions, Inc. Neeper moved, seconded by Thompson, that the ordinance be passed on the first reading. The following vote was recorded on the motion. Yea, 7; Gordon, Wilkerson, Thompson, Ehora, Glenn, Neeper and Nixon. Nay, none. The Chair declared the motion carried and the ordinance passes on the first reading by a 7-0 vote.

111-22 An Ordinance amending the 2022 annual budget. Neeper moved, seconded by Glenn, that the ordinance be passed on the first reading. The following vote was recorded on the motion. Yea, 7; Gordon, Wilkerson, Thompson, Ehora, Glenn, Neeper and Nixon. Nay, none. The Chair declared the motion carried and the ordinance passes on the first reading by a 7-0 vote.

112-22 An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to amend the contract with Cotterman Roofing, Inc. authorized under Ordinance 271-21. Ehora moved, seconded by Thompson, that the ordinance be passed on the first reading. The following vote was recorded on the motion. Yea, 7; Gordon, Wilkerson, Thompson, Ehora, Glenn, Neeper and Nixon. Nay, none. The Chair

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declared the motion carried and the ordinance passes on the first reading by a 7-0 vote.

113-22 An Ordinance amending Section 246.10 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Lima, Utilities Department authorized employment positions. Gordon moved, seconded by Wilkerson, that the ordinance be passed on the first reading. The following vote was recorded on the motion. Yea, 7; Gordon, Wilkerson, Thompson, Ehora, Glenn, Neeper and Nixon. Nay, none. The Chair declared the motion carried and the ordinance passes on the first reading by a 7-0 vote.

114-22 An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to accept a gift from All Phase Electric and the Electrical Systems Technology Group at Apollo JVS. Ehora moved, seconded by Wilkerson, that the ordinance be passed on the first reading. The following vote was recorded on the motion. Yea, 7; Gordon, Wilkerson, Thompson, Ehora, Glenn, Neeper and Nixon. Nay, none. The Chair declared the motion carried and the ordinance passes on the first reading by a 7-0 vote.

115-22 An Ordinance confirming the appointment of Fifth Ward Councilor, Jamie Dixon, to the Lima Community Improvement Corporation. Thompson moved, seconded by Gordon, that the ordinance be passed on the first reading. The following vote was recorded on the motion. Yea, 7; Gordon, Wilkerson, Thompson, Ehora, Glenn, Neeper and Nixon. Nay, none. The Chair declared the motion carried and the ordinance passes on the first reading by a 7-0 vote.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Nixon moved, seconded by Thompson, to approve the absence and salary of Councilor Dixon. Motion carried.

Councilor Neeper applauded those who were involved in the groundbreaking for the new amphitheater. He announced the Boulevard Neighborhood Association will be meeting Thursday at 7:00 pm at the Community Resource Center on Spring Street. He announced the Mayor's Spring Cleanup will be Saturday May 14th from 9-12pm and the dumpster will be located at 1571 Allentown Road.

Councilor Gordon expressed how big the total solar eclipse will be for our community. He thanked the pickle ball players, Mr. Stolly and the Mayor for their work. He reminded people to be good to each other.

Councilor Wilkerson applauded those who have the courage to stand in front of Council and speak. He reminded everyone it's motorcycle season and asked them to be mindful of riders. He recited a quote by Harry Trumen "In order to have good neighbors, we must also be good neighbors" which he feels applies to everyone.

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Councilor Thompson announced the Central Lima Neighborhood Association will be meeting Wednesday, April 27th at 6:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Church on Market Street. She expressed her appreciation of those people who are interested enough in the community that they are willing to step forward and ask questions. She thanked those who are spearheading the amphitheater project. She explained the amphitheater project revealed how much people care about the community that they were willing to invest in the community. She said there are two ways to improve the community and that is through money and effort. She expressed her condolences to the Monfort family for their loss.

Councilor Ehora thanked the pickle ball group and she expressed the discussion is not lost as they know it is an emerging sport in country. She expressed her concern with the number of storage pods that are sitting in driveways and are being used as sheds. She explained there is currently legislation against the storage pods being in the back yard but there is nothing against the pods being in the driveways. She expressed her concern with the large car ports. Ehora moved, seconded by Thompson, to refer the issue of portable storage units and other structures to the Public Works Committee. President Nixon clarified the issue is portable storage pods and he agrees there should be some limitation for the sake of others in the area. Motion carried.

Councilor Glenn thanked Peggy for bringing up the storage pod issue as he has a lot of them in his ward. He thanked the residents who cleaned up Broadway Street. He announced they will be bringing back the 6th Ward Beautiful Home of the Month. He also announced they will be starting the 6th Ward Paint Program and he appreciates the paint donations. He expressed the need to educate the homeless on where they can go to get help.

President Nixon advised Mr. Walters that the Parks Department is looking into alternate locations for a pickle ball court and they do recognize the need. Nixon expressed he understands and respects the Monforts' frustration but when there is a situation that is reported to you as a Councilor, and you know the situation is violating current City Code, you have a duty to do something otherwise you would be called irresponsible, unresponsive, just as Councilor Neeper was called those things this evening. He explained the responsibility for a vehicle being parked property or improperly falls on the owner of the vehicle, not a Councilor who tried to take care of a concern he either saw or was reported to. He expressed his disappointment because he thinks the Monforts' were a little harsh on Neeper and unwarranted.

Gordon moved that Council adjourn until May 9, 2022 at 7:00 p.m., seconded by Wilkerson. Ehora wished Mayor Smith a Happy Birthday. Council sang Happy Birthday to Mayor Smith. Motion carried.


Dana Addis, Clerk


John G. Nixon, President