

NORWALK CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES

October 11, 2016
7:30 p.m.

Municipal Court
Norwalk, Ohio

WORK SESSION

Council President Steve Euton called the Work Session to order. The following members were present: Steve Euton, Chris Mushett, Kelly Beck, Chris Castle, David Wallace, Steve Schumm, Deb Lucal, and Samantha Wilhelm.

Mayor Rob Duncan, Law Director Stu O'Hara, Finance Director Diane Eschen, Safety/Service Director Dan Wendt, Public Works Director Josh Snyder, Fire Chief John Soisson, and Police Chief Dave Light, were also present.

Item No. 16-092

A RESOLUTION CERTIFYING THAT THE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PLAN IS CONSISTENT WITH AND SUPPORTIVE OF THE AREA'S CURRENT ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT STRATEGY

Mayor Duncan explained that this is annual legislation and there have been no changes.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda for the next regular session.

Item No. 16-093

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE FINANCE DIRECTOR TO PAY ALERT TRACKING SERVICES, INC. FOR MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF NORWALK

Mrs. Eschen explained that there was no purchase order cut prior to the date of the invoice. Chief Light said that he has the money in his budget to pay for the services. This legislation is to allow him to transfer the money from other line items. He further explained that in 2013 the Police Department switched to Alert Tracking Services, Inc. which allows for communication and consistency with other local departments who also use Alert Tracking Services. He said that in 2014 and 2015 the 911 Committee paid the 1-year maintenance agreement. In 2016 the countywide amount due is \$27,331, of which \$6,832.75 is the City's share.

Mr. Schumm asked Chief Light to explain Alert Tracking Services, Inc. Chief Light said that it is dispatch software that the entire county uses. He said the system allows for data sharing and consistency between departments. He added that in the future they plan to connect to Erie County as well.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda for the next regular session.

Item No. 16-094

A RESOLUTION CREATING THE STATE ISSUE II OLD STATE ROAD WIDENING PHASE I FUND

Mrs. Eschen said that this legislation goes with the supplemental to create a fund to account for the expenditures and revenue.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda for the next regular session.

Item No. 16-095

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING THE 2016 ANNUAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE NO. 2015-057 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mrs. Eschen explained each item as listed in Exhibit A.

In reference to the Police Department, Chief Light said that the department has received donations in excess of \$22,000, of which \$10,500 will be used to fund a new police dog. He said he plans to use the additional funds to purchase a used K-9 car possibly from the State Highway Patrol. Mr. Euton requested a list of donors who contributed to the cause. Chief Light agreed to acquire that information.

In reference to the Fire Department, Chief Soisson explained the additional overtime hours and retirements. He cited two retirements, three new hires and one 4-month illness. Mr. Mushett asked if Chief Soisson anticipates this amount to be sufficient for the remainder of the year. Chief Soisson responded yes and said the department is back to full staff and he believes the numbers are conservative.

In reference to the Old State Road Widening Phase 1, Mr. Mushett questioned whether these were all anticipated costs. Mrs. Eschen said yes.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda for the next regular session.

Mr. Euton began the discussion on social media. He explained that he plans to use social media to communicate facts to the public. He said the facts could include agendas, packet contents, contact information, and the Council schedule. He said the changes will need to be added to the Council Rules to establish parameters. He added that he would like to include the words “or designee” following President of Council in the rules. This, he said, would give future Council Presidents the ability to delegate the responsibility. He clarified that whatever social media outlet is chosen would solely be used for Council purposes. While it would be administered by the Council Clerk, he said posting would be at the discretion of the Council President or designee.

Mr. Wendt asked if exhibits would be included in posts. Mr. Euton said anything that is public record could be included. He said there may also be links to the City website.

Mr. Wendt said that while it is possible to prevent people from commenting on Facebook, he doesn't think it is possible to prevent people from sharing the information and people commenting on that. Mr. Euton said it is important to establish operating guidelines to avoid straying from Council topics.

Mr. Euton explained that when Council comes to an agreement there will be a formal vote to add it to Council Rules. He said it is not necessary to add it to the rules, but he wants there to be structure.

Mr. Castle clarified that he initially created a Council Facebook page following his discussion with Mr. Euton. He also said that he has relinquished control of the site to the Council Clerk. He said it is his desire to get information to people in a timely manner.

Mr. Euton suggested posting a current photo of Council members with a neutral background. He said Mr. Castle did not do anything inappropriate and added that the parameters will be in place to protect Council members.

Mr. Schumm asked if other nearby cities have council Facebook pages or if Norwalk is a pioneer in the field. Mrs. Wilhelm quickly found Cleveland City Council's Facebook page. She added that she is in favor of the idea, but stressed that it should be strictly facts and have good structure.

Mr. Euton said that it would be easy to hire someone to establish a website, but constant upkeep and maintenance costs of the site would add up. Mr. Castle pointed out that not only is Facebook free, but it also alerts users when there is new information added. He said a website can't do that.

Mr. Euton asked Council members to examine the wording of the draft and report back with any ideas or changes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Euton explained the items listed to be the agenda items from the last Finance Committee meeting. He said he feels it is in the best interest of Council to include the committee as a whole in further discussions.

In reference to Diane's Finance Presentation, there was no discussion.

Mr. Wallace asked the Administration if they have any new ideas in reference to the Medical Insurance. Mr. Wendt said they met with the unions. He said the premiums are definitely going up and estimated an increase of \$20 per pay for a family plan. He explained that with union employees the City cannot touch the maximum out-of-pocket or deductible amounts.

Mr. Wallace asked if they are planning to make adjustments with the non-bargaining employees. Mr. Wendt said 60% of employees are non-union and the Administration plans to treat all employees equally.

Mr. Euton clarified that any increase would still be split 85/15 with the employee responsible for 15%. Mrs. Eschen said that is correct.

Mr. Wallace asked if the budget can handle any increases. Mr. Wendt confirmed that it can.

Mr. Wendt suggested scheduled incremental changes in the future. Mr. Beck clarified that those won't start until after contract negotiations. Mr. O'Hara said contracts are up for negotiation in 2018.

Mrs. Lucal inquired about the 80/20 split. Mrs. Eschen explained the 80/20 is what the employee pays until they reach their maximum out-of-pocket. Mrs. Lucal asked if it is possible for employees who have spousal insurance to opt-out of City insurance plans. Mayor Duncan said anyone can opt-out at any time.

Mr. Wallace clarified that the City's expenses will increase due to the raise in premiums and that the problem will not be addressed until contract negotiations in 2018. Mr. Wendt confirmed.

In reference to the budget discussion, Mrs. Eschen said she is working on it and plans to have the budget ready at the end of October. She said she has sent budget worksheets to department heads asking for a 5-year capital plan.

Item No. 16-067 was not discussed.

There was no discussion on upcoming levies.

Mr. Euton said that October 18, 2016 will be a Regular Session of Council.

ADJOURNMENT There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Stephen E. Euton – Council President

Jaime L. Peiples – Council Clerk