

NORWALK CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES

April 25, 2017
7:30 p.m.

Municipal Court
Norwalk, Ohio

WORK SESSION

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

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

The meeting began with a Fire Station Update presentation by Chief Soisson and Architects Joe Weithman and B.J. Mull. A copy of the presentation is on file with the clerk.

Mrs. Eschen explained how the bond anticipation notes work.

Mr. Mushett asked if the annual payment includes interest and principle. Mrs. Eschen said yes.

Mr. Schumm commended the Architects on the project. He asked if they have had to expand any of the stations they have previously built. Mr. Weithman explained that they moved the building back 25 feet to be able to add on for additional dorms or community room space.

Mr. Wallace asked Chief Soisson if the design of the apparatus space meets the needs for the City. Chief Soisson said yes, and added that if the Department gets any larger than the new station allows they would add another station.

Mrs. Lucal asked if the design would accommodate the hiring of female firefighters. Mr. Mull said yes and explained that the design has separate dormitory rooms with doors in addition to single occupant toilet/shower rooms.

Mr. Mushett asked if the City is insulated from any substantial cost overruns. Mr. Mull said they cannot make any promises, but they always add the inflation factor. Mr. Weithman added that in 19 years of business they have only had one project in which they had to re-bid a portion.

Mr. Wallace asked how this design compares to other departments they have designed. Mr. Weithman said they have done cheaper designs than this and they try to be conservative and realistic. He stated that the donations to this project have been unbelievable. Chief Soisson added that donations have not been factored into the numbers.

Mrs. Eschen said that she estimated the interest rates for the notes to be 3%. She said the rate for the notes on the balance of the water tower improvements was 2.4%.

Item No. 17-045

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF NOTES IN THE MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$845,000, IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING COSTS OF CONSTRUCTING A FIRE STATION

Mrs. Eschen explained that she will be issuing notes for the cost of constructing a fire station. She said the notes will mature one year after they are issued and the amount is up to \$845,000.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda.

Item No. 17-042

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN ODOT WINTER CONTRACT (018-18) FOR ROAD SALT

Mr. Snyder explained this to be an annual cooperative purchasing agreement with the Ohio Department of Transportation to buy road salt.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda.

Item No. 17-043

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR THE 2017 VALLEY PARK WATERLINE PROJECT AND AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT AFTER BIDDING

Mr. Snyder said Valley Park is the #1 street for water main breaks with there being 20 breaks in 2015.

Mr. Mushett asked if the project covers the entire street. Mr. Snyder said the project encompasses Jefferson Street to Main Street. He added that if bidding is favorable the plan is to add nearby cul-de-sac waterlines to the project.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda.

Item No. 17-044

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FINANCE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE LINE ITEM TRANSFERS WITHIN THE GENERAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND

Mrs. Eschen said that after receiving an updated estimate on inspection engineering for the Milan Avenue Corridor Project it is necessary to transfer an additional \$27,100.43 from the Old State Road Widening Project.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda.

Item No. 17-046

A RESOLUTION OF NECESSITY CAUSING THE PREPARATION OF PLANS, SPECIFICATIONS AND ESTIMATE OF COSTS FOR THE 2018 CITY SIDEWALK PROGRAM

Mr. Snyder said the 2018 Sidewalk Program will focus on subdivisions in the Parsons Street and North Street area.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda.

Item No. 17-047

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING THE 2017 ANNUAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE NO. 2016-045 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mrs. Eschen said this is a supplemental in the amount of \$108,401.74 for the grant portion of the additional inspection engineering on the Milan Avenue Corridor Project.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda.

Item No. 17-048

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING THE 2017 ANNUAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE NO. 2016-045 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mr. Wendt said this supplemental for approximately \$47,000 would cover the cost for the remainder of 2017 of hiring a 24th Police Officer.

Mrs. Wilhelm asked if this is something that should have been discussed in budget season. Mr. Wendt said they will continue to discuss staffing needs in all departments. He said Spring budget hearings just concluded and staffing will be discussed again in Fall budget hearings.

Mr. Mushett discussed his concerns in relation to the budget. He said he is unaware of any new revenue streams and doesn't think the City can afford this cost.

Mr. Wendt said he is only asking for \$47,000 from the General Fund this year. He explained the staffing problem at the Police Department. He also noted that the funds for the new Fire Station are coming from the General Capital Improvement Fund, not the General Fund.

Mr. Mushett expressed his concerns with the cost of the long term commitment of hiring another officer.

Mr. Euton asked if the Governor of Ohio has plans to help local governments with funding. Mr. Wendt said he just attended a symposium where this topic was addressed. He said the short answer is no.

Chief Light said the department has a different set of problems than they have had in years past. He said officers have been tied up with overdose cases instead of wrestling drunks on the weekends. He added that there needs to be stricter enforcement on dealers and increased treatment for addicts.

Mr. Wallace asked if Chief Light feels his officers have enough back-up. Chief Light said the department is down to two detectives and one juvenile officer. He said they have been forced to prioritize the calls when overloaded. He said the officers are taking risks they shouldn't be taking because the department is short staffed.

Mr. Wallace said the Administration and Council have a responsibility to prioritize and make this work. Mayor Duncan agreed that the safety issue has escalated and he has a responsibility to do something to keep the officers safe.

Mr. Schumm said he has anticipated the need for another officer. He said while he is very conservative when it comes to spending money, another officer is both needed and necessary.

Mrs. Lucal asked how the size of the Police Department compares to other cities that compare in size to Norwalk. Chief Light said most cities are understaffed with the exception of the Columbus area. He added that the department currently has two canine units and the bike patrol is still active.

Mr. Mushett asked what the revenue and expense performance has been so far in 2017 and asked for an update on where the Governor's office stands on local government funds. Mrs. Eschen said the cash balance is about \$1.7 million, income tax revenue is down 47% compared to last year at this time and expenses are exceeding revenues by \$884,000.

In reference to the Governor's office, Mayor Duncan said the status is still unknown. He said the legislature is putting pressure on them, but you can't bank on it at this time.


Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Euton said there will be a Regular Session May 2, 2017.

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


Stephen E. Euton Christopher C. Mushett
President Pro Tempore


Jaime L. Peiples
Clerk