

NORWALK CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES

July 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, Samantha Wilhelm, Chris Castle, Steve Schumm, Dave Wallace, and Deb Lucal. Kelly Beck was absent for personal reasons.

Mayor Rob Duncan, Law Director Stu O'Hara, Finance Director Diane Eschen, and Safety Service Director Dan Wendt were also in attendance.

Item No. 17-067

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE HURON COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mayor Duncan explained the two relevant changes to the Solid Waste Management Plan. First, he said a grant was added that the City could apply for to receive a rebate. Second, he said a provision was added that the City could apply for any excess grant funds that were not awarded to other communities. Lastly, he thanked Commissioners Boose and Hintz for attending the meeting.

Huron County Building and Grounds Supervisor Pete Welch was present to answer questions. He further explained the competitive grant and said that the County Commissioners have also agreed to show finances at the transfer stations.

Mr. Mushett asked how this plan compares to the current plan dollar-wise in reference to tipping fees. Mr. Welch said there will be no side agreement and they have put everything in the plan which is good for the next five years. He added that the main change is that the County is putting money out that the City is eligible to receive.

Mr. Schumm questioned the duration of the resolution. Mr. Welch said the plan is re-written every five years. He said the EPA has 90 days to approve the plan and they hope to have it approved by November. Mr. Welch confirmed that the next time this plan would come before City Council would be in five years.

Mr. Wallace asked what potential the City has in being awarded the grant funds. Mr. Welch said the potential is very high. He explained the requirements and said right now Norwalk is the only community in the County that meets all of them. He added that there is \$55,000 in grant funds of which Norwalk is eligible to receive \$40,000. He said Norwalk can apply for the additional \$15,000 if it is not awarded to other communities.

Mr. Euton asked what happens if there is a change in tipping fees. Mr. Welch said tipping fees are controlled by the Commissioners and they project that there will be no change in tipping fees until possibly 2022. He further explained the difference between generation fees and tipping fees.

Mayor Duncan said it is not a perfect plan in the eyes of the Administration, but they were able to work out a compromise and they feel this is the best thing for Norwalk at this time.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda.

Item No. 17-068

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE JOB CREATION GRANT PROGRAM

Mrs. Eschen explained the changes to the Job Creation Grant Program.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda.

Item No. 17-069

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 721 OF THE NORWALK CODIFIED ORDINANCES PERTAINING TO THE REGULATION OF TAXICABS

Mr. Wendt explained that the current taxicab ordinance is outdated and in need of change. He explained the three main changes to the ordinance to be the elimination of meters, distribution of reflective stickers to show current permits, and decreasing the frequency of safety inspections to one per year.

Mr. Mushett asked why the word “may” is used in various parts of the exhibit as opposed to “shall”. Mr. Wendt agreed to change the wording.

Mr. Schumm asked how many taxicabs are currently operating in Norwalk. Mr. Wendt said GT Cab, Tijuana Taxi, and Paco’s Taxi. Mr. Schumm asked what defines a taxicab. Mr. Wendt read the definition from Chapter 721 of the Norwalk Codified Ordinances.

Mrs. Wilhelm said that by that definition a citizen could operate an Uber without having to conform to the City taxicab regulations. Mr. Wendt explained that Uber drivers would be asked to follow the same regulations as taxicabs.

Mr. Euton asked about the three pages of the Codified Ordinances that were struck. Mr. O’Hara said most of the language that was struck was moved to make it more logical and easier to administer.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda.

Item No. 17-070

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE OHIO BUREAU OF WORKERS’ COMPENSATION FOR THE PROVISION OF WORKERS’ COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR VOLUNTEER WORKERS AT THE DISC GOLF COURSE

Mr. Wendt said that Comp Management estimates the coverage will cost \$450.00 annually. He said three members of the Norwalk Disc Golf Association have been trained in safety and will be logging their time performing light maintenance on the disc golf course at Veterans’ Memorial Park on a volunteer basis.

Mr. Mushett asked if this exposes the City to liability. Mr. Wendt said the insurance will cover treatment for injury and prevent lawsuits.

Mr. Wallace asked if volunteers are required to notify the City before they do any work. Mr. Wendt said yes, Niki Cross and Joe Lindenberger will oversee the volunteers. He added that the volunteers need prior authorization before doing any maintenance.

Mrs. Wilhelm asked if they anticipate the need for more than three volunteers. Mr. Wendt said they felt that three volunteers would be sufficient for the maintenance of the disc golf course. He said he would also like to have volunteers maintain the pocket parks eventually. He added that the General Services Superintendent performed the safety training for the volunteers.

Mr. Castle asked if future volunteer groups could be covered by this plan as well. Mr. Wendt said Council would be allowed to consider future proposals from other volunteer groups.

Mr. Wallace asked about the liability of the Master Gardeners who currently maintain landscaping at several locations in the City. Mr. Wendt said he will investigate and report back.

Mr. Euton asked what happens if a volunteer gets injured while working on the disc golf course and cannot go to work at their regular job. Mr. O'Hara said wages would not be covered. He said that is a risk you take any time you volunteer.

Mr. Mushett asked if the contract could be expanded to include any volunteer approved labor within the City. Mr. Wendt said he feels this is a good pilot given the efficacy of the group. Mr. O'Hara said that the Bureau of Workers' Compensation requires specific categories of volunteers. Mr. Mushett discussed the general plan the County has for community service programs.

Mr. Wallace asked if the City's rates would be affected if a volunteer were to get injured. Mr. Wendt said yes. He said volunteers have signed waivers, but Workers' Compensation coverage is still highly recommended by risk management.

Council members agreed to place this item on the agenda.

Gerri Anderson, 13B Old Village Road was present to voice her concerns with her landlord. She cited the presence of mold in apartments, fallen branches, poor driveway conditions, unmowed lawns, and excessive weeds around the mailboxes. Mr. Euton asked Mr. Wendt to provide Ms. Anderson with the tenants rights pamphlet available at City Hall and confirm that Zoning Inspector Mitch Loughton is following up with the issue. Mr. Wendt agreed.

Mr. Wallace asked if it would be possible to ask Mr. Loughton to follow up on all issues that are presented at Council meetings and report back.

Mr. Schumm asked when Council can expect legislation on the issue of blight and junk cars. Mr. Wendt said he is not ready to give a date at this time.

Mr. Wallace requested an update on the former Eagle Gas Station property. Mayor Duncan said he is awaiting return phone calls and will give an update next week.

Mrs. Lucal asked about the status of the Highway Composites/Pippo building on Republic. Mr. Wendt agreed that it is a dangerous property. He said the Administration is looking at the process.

Mr. Euton began discussion on a memo issued by Mr. O'Hara concerning the Finance Director Position. A copy of the memo is on file with the clerk.

Mr. Euton said the purpose of amending the Codified Ordinances is to avoid future problems.

Mr. Wallace said he would like an opportunity to review the information and discuss further next Tuesday.

Mr. Schumm requested a copy of the current performance review form. Mayor Duncan agreed to provide the form at the next meeting.

Mrs. Lucal asked how the date of the performance review is determined. Mayor Duncan said typically performance reviews are done the first two months of the year.

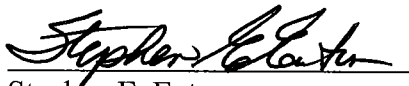
Mr. Mushett said he doesn't see who sets the compensation rate for the position. Mr. O'Hara said the rate is in the pay ordinance. He added that it could be set by Council and added as subsection (d). Mayor Duncan suggested that raises be addressed at yearly performance reviews. Mr. Euton said that if it was addressed at the yearly review the budget year would already have been set and a supplemental would be required. Mr. O'Hara said they could fashion the budget to provide for a possible raise, supplement the budget, or hold off on the raise until the following year.

Mr. Euton discussed the schedule for August. Council members agreed to do a formal vote at the next Regular Session to change the August 15, 2017 Regular Session to August 22, 2017.


UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS – none

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



Stephen E. Euton
President



Jaime L. Peiples
Clerk