

MINUTES – REGULAR SESSION

PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING
 Monday February 24, 2020
 6:00 p.m.

The City Council of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio met in regular session on Monday February 24, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

Mayor Kevin E. Johnson called the meeting to order. A moment of silent prayer was observed followed by The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call showed the following members to be present:

Sean Dunne	1 st Ward
Charlotte Gordon	2 nd Ward
Kevin E. Johnson	3 rd Ward
Andrew McManus	4 th Ward
Edwin Martell	5 th Ward
Thomas K. Lowe	6 th Ward

Also present was, City Manager Sam Sutherland, Solicitor John Haas, Auditor M. Trent Williams and City Clerk Diana Ratliff.

Council dispensed with the reading of the Journal for the Regular Session of February 10, 2020 on a motion by Vice President Dunne. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes –0 nays.**

STATEMENTS OR REMARKS FROM CITIZENS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There was no one present that wished to address Council pertaining to items on the agenda.

LEGISLATION

The clerk gave a **third reading**, to an Ordinance amending Section 175.07 (c) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio – Licensing; Insurance.

Vice President Dunne moved that the Ordinance be passed.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nays, the Ordinance was passed.**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, to an Ordinance authorizing the acceptance of grant funds from the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice Services under the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program for Drug Task Force use, establishing a dedicated account for the grant and authorizing the appropriation of such funding as received.

Vice President Dunne moved that this constitute a first reading.

Councilwoman Gordon asked if there were matching funds involved with the grant. Auditor Williams stated that it would be matched from the Police Departments own funding, it does not come from the general fund. He said that would apply to any of the other Police grants that were on the agenda.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nays, a first reading was declared.**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, to an Ordinance authorizing the acceptance of grant funds from the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice Services under the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program for Police Department equipment purchases, establishing a dedicated account for the grant and authorizing appropriation of such funding as received.

Vice President Dunne moved that this constitute a first reading.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nays, a first reading was declared.**

**Ord. #06 – 2020
 Amended
 Section 175.05
 (c) annual
 charge for tree
 contractors**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, to an Ordinance to submit to the electors of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio, at the General Election to be held on the 3rd day of November, 2020 a proposed renewal tax levy for the Flood Defense System of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio, after declaring the amount of taxes that may be raised by levy at the maximum rate authorized by law without a vote of the electors to be insufficient.

Vice President Dunne moved that this constitute a first reading.

Councilman Lowe asked if there was a percentage. Auditor Williams said that it was a mil levy which was a renewal of the existing levy for a 5-year period.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nays, a first reading was declared.**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, to an Ordinance authorizing the appropriation of \$12,000.00 from Capital Improvement Fund No. 301 to be paid from Land Improvement Cemetery/ Grounds Line Item No. 301.333.5502 for building improvements to the Police Department Firing Range.

Vice President Dunne moved that this constitute a first reading.

Mayor Johnson asked why the funds were being taken from the cemetery/grounds fund for land improvement for the Police Department Firing Range. Auditor Williams stated that this encompassed any ground that the city owns.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nays, a first reading was declared.**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, to a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for and follow the grant guidelines for a Safe Routes to School Grant through the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Vice President Dunne moved that the Resolution be adopted.

Mayor Johnson asked about Section II where it reads “if awarded the STRS funds agrees to pay 100% of the construction cost over and above the maximum amount provided by the State of Ohio Department of Transportation.” He asked if the city was paying for that? Councilwoman Gordon replied that the city pays the overage. Manager Sutherland stated that the project is \$442,000 and the city’s portion would be \$40,000. Auditor Williams asked what the STRS funds were and Solicitor Haas replied Safe Routes to School. Mr. Johnson stated the way he reads it was that the city was on the hook for anything over that \$442,000. Solicitor Haas said that it was based on what Community Development provided his office and he wasn’t sure what was behind the changes in the resolution, but he reads it that if the costs went over \$442,000 the city was agreeing to pay the difference. Mr. Johnson said that it was brought up at the last meeting that the school should be helping to pay for some of that, Mr. Sutherland stated that most legislation reads this way because the Ohio Department of Transportation was the one that provided the wording for the legislation. Councilman Lowe asked if this included all schools and Mr. Sutherland explained that the project included the Gallia & Waller Street schools. He also said that there had been talk about looking at other spots. Auditor Williams asked when the project would begin and Mr. Sutherland replied not until 2024. Vice President Dunne explained that ODOT wanted the assurance that if this project got started that it would also be finished.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nays, the Resolution was adopted.**

STATEMENTS OR REMARKS FROM CITIZENS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Kay Barlowe 2017 Waller Street Portsmouth, OH – She said it was that time of year that their board got together to decide what they were going to do and she asked Council to help defer the costs of the magnificent weekend they have planned. This year it will be held July 3rd through July 5th. She submitted a letter to the City Clerk and they ask for help with this as Council has done in the past.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND REPORTS:

City Clerk’s Report – Clerk Ratliff reported the following:

1. She received an Oath of Office for Sean Boldman for the Civil Service Commission and an Oath of Office for Police Officer Jacob Cooper.
2. She received a call from the State House inviting City Officials to the State House during session to honor Portsmouth with a Resolution for making it into the Guinness Book of World Records. City

**Res. #04 – 2020
Apply &
Follow Grant
Guidelines for
Safe School
Routes through
ODOT**

**Oath of Office
for Sean
Boldman
Civil Service
Commission
and Jacob
Cooper Police
Officer**

Officials and members of Friends of Portsmouth will be received at the State House on February 26, 2020.

The City Clerk's report was received, filed and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Dunne. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

City Manager's Report – Manager Sutherland had no report.

Mayor's Report – Mayor Johnson reported the following:

1. He re-appointed David Stone and George L. Davis, III to the Design and Review Board, Regina Chabot to the Cultural Affairs Panel, Dr. David Walker to the Board of Health and Sharon Bender to the Portsmouth Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.
2. He received a call from a resident that ran-over some concrete and had considerable damage to her vehicle. She had spoken with the city's insurance company, and the City Manager. He felt that they needed to sit down and meet with the resident and hear her out. He would also like the insurance representative to be there as well.
3. He met with Pastor Tim Roth, Jen Roth and Manager Sutherland on February 13th to discuss the ballfield options for next year's levee project because the Corp of Engineers will need to utilize the space where the current ballfield is located. There will be a follow up meeting on March 6th to see how the ballfields will be arranged next year
4. What was the status of Mr. Albrecht's letter of concern regarding the new hotel? Manager Sutherland said that he was still gathering information and has a draft started and should be able to get it to him very soon.
5. He would like three items to be listed on the next City Manager's Agenda. 1. Northend Reunion 2. Rich Scarberry who made a presentation at the last meeting regarding Archery Hunting 3. He would like to receive the Council packets earlier.
6. He met with Councilwoman Gordon on a variety of city ward issues.
7. He attended the annual Community Action Organization luncheon which was very informative. He thanked Steve Sturgill for the invitation and the update on the CAO and their services to our city and their partnerships in our city.

Re-appointment of D. Stone and G. Davis to the Design Review Board, R. Chabot to Cultural Affairs, Dr. David Walker to Board of Health and Sharon Bender to PACVB

The Mayor's report was received, filed and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Dunne. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

Solicitor Haas Report – Solicitor Haas reported the following:

1. He said that there had been some movement in the Opioid litigation which was ongoing. He said there were a lot of questions floating around and they were wanting the city to make a decision on how to proceed; he should have more information in the near future.

The Solicitor's report was received, filed and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Dunne. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

Auditor Williams Report – Mr. Williams reported the following:

1. He emailed his monthly report and pointed out one item that had not happened in over a decade which was all of the major funds on the report were positive fund balances at the end of January, even the sewer fund. He's not sure if it will continue in February but for now it was positive.

The Auditor's report was received, filed and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Dunne. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS FROM CITY COUNCIL

1st Ward – Councilman Dunne reported the following:

1. The Shawnee State Chapter of the Ohio Innocence Project will be hosting the East Cleveland Three on Wednesday February 26th in the Flohr Lecture Hall at the Shawnee State campus. They will be speaking to students, faculty and anyone that wants to attend, the admission is free about being wrongly incarcerated for two decades for a crime they didn't commit.
2. He had been in contact with Mr. Williams about the Portsmouth Street Art Project and would like to move forward with a resolution designating part of Offnere Street for the project. He said that Mr. Williams had been in contact with the Murals Committee and they had one issue with the project which was the general policing of it. Mr. Williams was prompt with information and great to work with by all accounts. There was language brought up from the Army Civil Corp of Engineers which was why the Offnere Street option seemed the most favorable.
3. He said that he had received a lot of mentions that the City Auditor deserved a raise, as they were very happy with the different ways in which the auditor's work was verified.
4. He said there were issues about enforcement of semi-trucks traveling on Chillicothe Street and asked if it was possible to get a basic arch at the north and south ends of Chillicothe Street which would prevent semi-trucks from traveling on Chillicothe Street and might be the easiest way to solve the

problem. Hopefully the arches would read “Welcome to Portsmouth” and could be done at an inexpensive cost.

5. He thanked Manager Sutherland for a variety of quick responses that he has had from concerns in the first ward over the past couple of weeks.
6. He said that the 2020 All-American City application had been submitted and was currently under review and reiterated from the last meeting that Portsmouth had won the award in 1980. He pointed out that the Department of Health had done incredible work in collecting and presenting data. He named the Scioto Foundation and Friends of Portsmouth and what they had accomplished in the last five-years, and said it was enjoyable to write but was different than a grant application where money was being requested; this application focused more on the acknowledgements of the things that were taking place in the city. The application would be judged upon issues relating to inclusiveness, diversity, innovative thinking, collaboration between different institutions, civic engagements and a few other things. It was enjoyable to do and he was appreciative of everyone support.

2nd Ward – Councilwoman Charlotte Gordon reported the following:

1. She attended three compelling events at the 14th Street Community Center celebrating Black History Month. They were very enriching programs.
2. She said there were three representatives from the Ohio Arts Council that visited and toured Portsmouth. They try to come down fairly often but it had been a while since they had been in town. They were working on a project that would impact area artists and regional artists in June.
3. She said the Museum will be holding a free event on Saturday February 29th from 1-5 p.m. with guest artist Ron Davey. It will consist of linoleum block and block printing and everyone would get a chance to participate.

3rd Ward – Councilman Kevin E. Johnson reported the following:

1. He received a message regarding some huge potholes in the alley behind the 1800 block of Vinton Avenue and also where it met with McConnel.
2. He thanked the media for coming to the meetings.

4th Ward – Councilman McManus reported the following:

1. He wrote a column for the Portsmouth Daily Times three or four weeks ago on a class at Portsmouth High School and Teacher Keely Matteson who teaches a class with Special Needs Children who were taught a little differently. He was contacted by Kelsey Souto from WSAZ news station who did a follow-up story highlighting the teachers and the kids, and he congratulated them on getting some much-deserved spotlight.
2. He as well as Councilman Martell and Councilwoman Gordon attended a meeting of the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) with Redonna Chandler and Scott Walters. He said they were very nice people and they reviewed different issues in town.
3. He said that a constituent called him regarding a giant pothole in Sav-a-Lot parking lot and after checking with Manager Sutherland, he found out it was private property. He called the Manager’s on staff at Sav-a-Lot and they gave him the name of the realty company that owned the lot, which was Namdar Realty. He reached out to Namdar Realty to fix it.
4. He has had several calls regarding the lighting in his ward, where it’s either dim or out completely. He is compiling a list of different problem areas and will get in touch with Manager Sutherland to help make these areas a little brighter to help prevent crime, trash and pollution.

5th Ward – Councilman Martell reported the following:

1. He met with NIDA representatives with Councilman McManus and Councilwoman Gordon.
2. He went to the North by Night Play about the heroes of the underground railroad which was sponsored by the Portsmouth Area Arts Council and Time Out for Me, Inc. He said it was an awesome play and he really enjoyed it.
3. He attended the 14th Street Community Center Black History Month expo hosted by Dr. Feight, Drew Carter and Amanda Lewis. He thanked them for the invitation.
4. He visited the County Jail and met with Captain Shawn Sparks. He thanked him for the awesome conversation and tour.

6th Ward – Councilman Lowe reported the following:

1. He thanked Manager Sutherland for fixing the road slip on Dunlap Road and for the patch that was put in front on Sciotoville Elementary Academy on 3rd Street in Sciotoville.
2. He received a report of a silver Pontiac with no license tags in the 5400 block of Wilson Avenue.
3. He said that the Tartan Treasure will be held on March 7th at the SOMC Friends Center and the tickets are \$100.00 with a chance to win \$5,000. He is a big supporter and if anyone wanted a ticket, they should contact the School as the money raised will be for East High School Athletics.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:41 p.m. on a motion by Vice President Dunne.