

MANAGER’S CONFERENCE MINUTES
Portsmouth City Council Meeting on
May 11, 2020 – 7:20 p.m.

Members 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 and City Clerk Diana Ratliff. Auditor M. Trent Williams was not present.

1. **Equal Rights Legislation** **CM-20-21**

Manager Sutherland was speaking but was muffled by his mask, Vice President Dunne relayed what was said. He said this legislation would be to update antidiscrimination legislation, specifically the areas of employment, housing and public accommodations, specifically in reference to the LGBTQ community.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 Ayes – 0 Nays**

2. **2020 Capital Improvement Budget** **CM-20-22**

Manager Sutherland stated this legislation was for the capital improvement budget for Funds 301, 606, 622 and 623.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 Ayes – 0 Nays**

3. **Annual Financial Audit** **CM 20-23**

Auditor Williams stated this was an addition to the modification of our audit contract as it was determined over the last year or so, that the Portsmouth City Health Department needed treated separately for auditing purposes by the State of Ohio, and as a result, they’ve worked with an auditing firm to develop this modification agreement that will basically include the Health Department in the city’s annual financial report. They also had to complete their own financial report this year, which they did and now they can begin the audit once the modification is approved by Council.

Councilman Lowe asked about the extra \$6,210 and Auditor Williams replied that was for the extra work being done by the Health Department. He also said he believed that there would be enough money to handle that amount, however he needed the modification approved.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 Ayes – 0 Nays**

4. **CAFR Preparation Assistance**

CM 20-24

Auditor Williams stated that this was the firm that the city works with for the preparation of our Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR) which is done every year and has been included in the 2020 budget and had not increased in the past several years. He said there was a \$750.00 increase because of the Health Department's part of the financial report, but that's the only increase in the contract. He asked that this have emergency language because this was legislation that Council would have already addressed had it not been for the State shut-down due to the Coronavirus.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 Ayes – 0 Nays**

5. **PACE Financing District**

CM 20-25

This needs to be passed as an emergency due to time restraints.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 Ayes – 0 Nays**

Discussion

1. **Spartan Stadium Appraisal**– Vice President Dunne stated that Spartan Stadium had received a grant from the state which required an appraisal to direct how much the State would provide for renovations on the stadium. He's been in touch with different groups that provide commercial real estate appraisals and found it very difficult to find a special use for a commercial facility. He found one and was trying to determine the best pricing and where we are at with moving forward this year. He had a bid for \$12,500 but hoped to get a revised bid for about 60% of that cost. He said that the discussion needs to consist of 1) What the renovations of Spartans Stadium would be 2) how much is it going to cost 3) How do we get it funded with money outside of our city budget? The Hopewell facility grant provided the best opportunity to do that, but right now he wasn't 100% certain of the viability of that due to the State's financial situation. There were some other items he would like to follow up on before the next meeting and would like to continue the discussion.

2. **Establishment of Outdoor Drinking Zone**

Vice President Dunne stated there had been a few people in the city who had talked about having an outdoor drinking zone and what that generally involved would be a section of the city and four businesses within that section. This would bring foot traffic into the downtown.

He said that Cincinnati shuts down streets to allow for outdoor dining which is a safer way for people to eat and drink without being crowded indoors and he was hopeful this would be an opportunity for Portsmouth to offer a safe place to walk throughout the downtown.

He said typically you would get a bracelet for \$1.00 and then you would buy your drinks at these different places. He said to be a sponsor the business would already have to have a permit through the state, basically all the bars and restaurants that have liquor licenses already. There was an issue about our city being less than 35,000 people which was the normal minimum population requirement, however, if you have four sponsors in a zone, you could still establish a district.

He posted the Zoom meeting on FaceBook that he took part in, and he would like other Councilmembers to check it out. He said the video shows what has taken place in Middletown and they started with Thursday, Friday & Saturday's from 6:00 p.m. until midnight and now it's noon to midnight, seven days a week. It was a complete success for them and there have been others throughout the State of Ohio that have started utilizing this feature.

He said that more thought needed put into it to determine how it would work. Councilwoman Gordon asked if they had a trash issue, Mr. Dunne stated that people had asked about trash and security but it

wasn't much of an issue. She also asked about noise issues and if all of the businesses had their restrooms opened, because this was a problem in our downtown with people urinating and vomiting all throughout downtown. Mr. Dunne wasn't sure if there were outdoor facilities or if the businesses allowed people to use their restrooms, but we obviously want to avoid those types of situations.

Councilman Lowe asked Solicitor about the legal options and Mr. Haas replied the only question he would ask would be if there were four established businesses in a certain area willing to proceed. Mr. Dunne stated that perhaps the Bridge Carryout, Brew Pub, Patties & Pints and possibly the new hotel or the Holiday Inn.

Ms. Gordon stated that there was a problem with enforcement currently and what happens if issues start to arise. She asked if our Police were ready to start arresting people or giving out tickets. She would like to see better enforcement before we start with open container laws.

Ms. Gordon also asked about potential Shawnee State students and if that would deter parents from allowing their child to become a student. Mr. Dunne stated he thought it would provide a more vibrant downtown and Solicitor Haas commented that he has a college aged son and when he went away his Freshman year, he wasn't put-off by all of the outdoor activity, quite the opposite. Mr. Dunne stated that this doesn't give a pass to public drunkenness, but a lot more thought and discussion needs to take place.

Councilwoman Gordon made a motion to recess into Executive Session with the City Manager and the Solicitor to discuss potential sale of property.

The role was called and the motion carried: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays, Council recessed into Executive Session at 7:42 p.m.**

Executive
Session

Councilwoman Gordon moved that Council reconvene from Executive Session. The roll was called and the motion carried. **VOTE: ayes 6 – nays 0, Council reconvened with all still in attendance at 7:56 p.m.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m. on a motion by Councilman Lowe.

Submitted by: *Diana Ratliff* – City Clerk