

MANAGER’S CONFERENCE MINUTES
Portsmouth City Council Meeting on
June 8, 2020 – 7:30 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 (Absent)

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

1. **AEP Easement** **CM-20-29**

Manager Sutherland said this was an easement that would take power lines across the floodwall from the 10th Street Sub-Station and across the Route #52 bottoms and would be an upgrade to the Route #52 area. He asked AEP to check with the Corp of Engineers on positioning the poles to make sure they don’t interfere with the floodwall, but he hadn’t heard back from them to date.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

2. **Contractor Registration** **CM-20-30**

Manager Sutherland said that Solicitor Haas needed legislation changed pertaining to Contractor registration. Solicitor Haas stated that this had been an issue for several years regarding Contractor’s doing work in the city and then getting shut down because they refuse to register. These contractor’s go away for a little while and then come back. He was contacted by a Realtor that had had some issues with properties where the contractors worked on the properties and the work wasn’t done properly. These contractors weren’t registered and they knew they had to be registered before working within the city. When he researched the ordinances, he found that there was no penalty section. He contacted other cities with respect to contractor registration and was able to change it around and came up with a new registration process. This would be the process; however, the city would not be enforcing the contractor registration, but this would allow the city to keep track of “who’s doing what”. The city would not be passing judgement on the contractor as to whether they’re good or not, but if there were enough complaints the city could terminate their registration.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

3. **Sale of Former Adelpia Property** **CM 20-31**

Manager Sutherland said that this pertained to the sale of the former Adelpia property and that there were three (3) bids, but the lowest bid was the only bid that had a plan. This bidder would actually start on the property and get something done with it within 60-90 days from close and the other two bidders did not submit plans. This property had sat idle long enough and he wanted to see something happen on that property. Mayor Johnson ask if we could stipulate that something had to be done with the property within 60-90 days and Solicitor Haas stated that if that were the request, it should’ve been submitted with the request for bids. Mayor Johnson also asked if the city would find themselves in problems with taking the lowest bid instead of the highest bid considering the lowest bid was the only bid that had plans. Solicitor

Haas stated that the city could accept the best bid, but one thing Council needed to consider was getting the property back on the tax base and putting the property to use. Mayor Johnson asked Mr. Nolan when his plan to start was and Mr. Nolan replied that if the property closed on Monday, they would begin construction on Tuesday.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

4. **Tax Budget/Public Hearing**

CM 20-32

Manager Sutherland said this was from the City Auditor and the tax budget was something we do every year along with the Public Hearing.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

Discussion

1. **Strand and Associates Engineering Project Discussion** – Chris Ruggles with Strand and Associates gave a power point presentation. Infrastructure Project Updates – 1. The Water Treatment Plant design loan. 2. The Coles Boulevard Storm Sewer. 3. North Moreland sewer lining. 4. Webb Alley sewer pump station.
2. **Establishment of Outdoor Drinking Zone** – Manager Sutherland stated that he, Vice President Dunne and Chief Brewer discussed some aspects. VP Dunne said that Chief Brewer suggested that he start contacting businesses in this district that would not be vendors and he hadn't spoken with everyone yet, but had received 100% approval from those that he had spoken with. He said they spoke about the logistics on how it would operate (cups, bracelets etc.) and the Chief was supportive of it; he had also spoken with a local company where he could get the cups and bracelets produced. He said that the plan had been revised and the zone reduced compared to the first suggestion he gave Council. The concentration would be on the riverfront, an idea in which the Chief supported. Councilwoman Gordon asked about the trash pickup and receptacles and VP Dunne stated that Middletown had a pilot program to begin with and a trash plan was included. Mrs. Gordon asked if this would start as a pilot program and what were the hours? VP Dunne stated that around the state they typically end at midnight. Councilman Martell commented that he believed Middletown was from 6:00 -12:00 and it was Thursday, Friday and Saturday and now he believed it to be noon-midnight seven days a week. Mrs. Gordon asked how long the pilot program lasted and Mr. Martell replied that in the video he watched, the program progressed very rapidly and they advanced the timelines because of its popularity and believed it to be around one month. It was requested that legislation be moved to the Conference Agenda and Solicitor Haas asked that plenty of information be given to him in advance.
3. **Live Streaming of Council Meeting** – Mayor Johnson stated that people have told him that they really enjoy watching the Council meetings, however the sound was an issue. He and VP Dunne met with Dave Lucas Communications who had given the city a proposal. His company would attend Council meetings, run the facebook broadcast and would provide microphones for each member. He currently handled the County Commissioners and Ironton City Council and the fee was \$350 per month with a one-year contract. He was generous enough to include coverage for Council's Special Sessions, but if there were a bunch he would like to be reimbursed. Betty from Scioto County Daily News ask if there was a bid process and Mayor Johnson replied that it had been mentioned over the past several months that sound was an issue. Mayor Johnson stated that the proposal was good until July and requested that it be entered in on the next meeting.
4. **Grass Cutting Charges added to Water Bill** – Manager Sutherland stated that Councilman McManus had suggested putting grass cutting charges onto the water bills but he needed to look into the legalities because empty lots don't have water bills. Solicitor Haas stated that he didn't know if it was legal to add it to the water bill because you would be shutting their water off because they didn't

cut their grass. He suggested citing them into court or sending them separate bills. Councilwoman Gordan said that it wasn't like the neighbors reported them for missing a couple of days of cutting grass because the grass was as tall as she was. Councilman McManus said that currently the city puts a special lien on their property tax and the city doesn't get that back for five to six years, Manager Sutherland added that you may never get it back because chances are, they're not paying their taxes. Manager Sutherland said we want to see about taking possession of these properties and selling them, if possible, offer them to the neighbors who would take care of the property. Mayor Johnson asked if our Code Enforcement Officer wrote tickets for high grass and Manager Sutherland replied that they had recently started picking up the pace on those offenses. Councilman Martell asked if there was a report generated by the Code Enforcement Office? He believed that Councilwoman Gordon had previously brought up the issue and she replied that because these were complaints, she received the most calls on, that was what her report was about this evening. Mr. Martell asked if it were possible to get a report and Manager Sutherland said that was something they were currently working on and hoped to have it by next month.

Councilman Martell asked if we got the equipment for teardowns and Manager Sutherland stated that they were in the process of ordering it. Solicitor Haas stated that the next problem that the city will run into was with property owners that live out of state. He asked how the city would serve them notice because the city can't just take their property and it would not be a simple fix. Mayor Johnson said there's a problem with lending institutions; they own the property and won't do anything. Solicitor Haas concluded with one of the tricks that some of these lending places were doing was buying the property back from the owner and then not recording the deed and the property sits idle.

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m. on a motion by Vice President Dunne.

Submitted by: *Diana Ratliff* – City Clerk