

MANAGER’S CONFERENCE MINUTES
Portsmouth City Council Meeting on
June 14, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

Members present:

Sean Dunne	1 st Ward
Charlotte Gordon	2 nd Ward
Kevin E. Johnson	3 rd Ward
Lyvette Mosley	4 th Ward
Edwin Martell	5 th Ward
Dennis Packard	6 th Ward

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

1. **NEW WATER TREATMENT PLANT FINAL DESIGN LOAN** **CM-21-46**

Manager Sutherland stated that this had already been taken care of during the Council meeting and can be removed.

2. **APPROPRIATION NEW WATER TREATMENT PLANT LOAN** **CM-21-47**

Manager Sutherland stated that because the city was borrowing money, they had to figure out a way to pay the Engineering firm and asked Council to establish an appropriation for that money went it arrived so that Auditor Williams would not be delayed in paying the Engineer.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1.

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

3. **AMERICAN RESCUE ACT MUNNS RUN APPROPRIATION** **CM-21-48**

Manager Sutherland stated that with the American Rescue Act funding that would be coming soon, the city was supposedly allotted \$3,952,000.00 which could be used towards infrastructure and that would be the best way to share the wealth with the customers city and county wide. He’s asking for a fund to be established and then to appropriate the \$300,000 for Munn’s Run Pumping Station and the remaining \$3,652,000 would go towards the New Water Treatment Plant, Munns Run Sewer Pump Station and the Franklin Furnace pumping station construction.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1.

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

4. **CODE ENFORCEMENT APPROPRIATIONS** **CM-21-49**

Manager Sutherland asked for additional appropriations to be able to tear down more houses and help to deal with high grass and weeds. He outlined his plan as follows: \$75,000 was allotted for this year for teardowns and he would like an additional \$75,000 to add to it and in the future budgets he would allot \$150,000. He would also put it in the forecast so that the State Auditors would be aware. He said in the miscellaneous service, he was asking for an addition \$60,000 to help take care of cutting the grass. He advised that approximately 30 invoices had been sent out for the properties that had been mowed and they were waiting to hear from those property owners. Councilwoman Gordon asked if the city would allow Habitat for Humanity to go through the condemned houses to strip out anything that may be usable to keep them out of landfills. Mr. Sutherland advised that he did not see a problem with it, but the city doesn’t have space to store it and she replied that it would be Habitat’s responsibility. Ms. Gordon asked if any of the condemned homes had ever been used by the Fire Department for practice? Mr. Sutherland advised “no” and Solicitor Haas commented that there would be too many liability issues. Mr. Haas stated that the same question had been brought up in the past; also, with any property that Habitat would like to strip, they would need to sign

a release so if someone was in one of these condemned houses and got hurt, they could not come back and sue the city. Vice President Dunne asked if there was a list of priority houses that needed demolished, Mr. Sutherland stated that they were currently working on that, but they were in the ballpark of 100.

Councilman Martell asked how long we were giving the property owners to get the invoices paid? Mr. Sutherland said not long because if you give them 30 days, we would just be in a viscous cycle. Mr. Martell asked what legal actions happen if they don't pay? Mr. Sutherland replied that if they didn't pay it would be assessed onto their property tax. Ms. Gordon said that we then would need the county to enforce the payment of taxes and the county wasn't doing a very good job as there were a lot of properties in her ward that were delinquent. Mr. Haas stated that the County does not have the man power nor the staff to go out on every case of back taxes. Mr. Dunne stated they don't even collect on the egregious ones but he hoped to speak to Governor DeWine about that at their meeting tomorrow. Ms. Gordon stated that maybe the State could step in and help collect the delinquent taxes.

Mayor Johnson asked if the \$60,000 in miscellaneous was going towards overtime or would the city be using other grass cutting services. Mr. Sutherland stated that currently it would go towards other grass cutting services because our guys could not keep up with what they currently have on their schedule.

Mr. Martell stated that "Serve Day" was coming up and they had asked him about projects. Mr. Sutherland stated that if they wanted to cut grass, then absolutely and he would provide the list of places that need cut. He actually would like the Serve Day folks to concentrate on the gateways into the city. Mr. Dunne stated that the city was saving money now with the Impound Lot and there would now be five cars instead of six in the Police Department and there was now a savings, could this money be applied toward Code Enforcement, which would be \$45,000 from Impound and roughly \$50,000 for the car. Mr. Sutherland stated that was a mechanism to help pay for the Medcat but no matter what is done with it, it would be going into the General Fund. Mr. Dunne stated that if we did something like that, it would show our commitment to Code Enforcement. Mayor Johnson stated "that's putting the cart before the horse" because the Armored car was tabled and wasn't taken off yet so the money could still be spent on the Medcat. Mr. Dunne stated that at the last meeting it was discussed to seek out grant money for the armored vehicle and also splitting the cost of it with the County which in his discussion with Lenco, there were numerous examples of shared services. This would be how the city shows a commitment to Code Enforcement and shows taxpayers, that money collected from certain types of violation would then go into correcting other violations. Councilwoman Mosley asked if the city was still going to get a second code enforcer and a clerk, Mr. Sutherland replied that they were going to get a second code enforcer which was already budgeted, but currently Renee Matiz had said that she would try doing the paperwork for a while and if it goes alright, then we would talk later.

Councilman Martell motioned to accept alternative #1.

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

5. **AMENDMENTS TO CODIFIED ORDINANCES (ENGINEERING DEPT)** **CM-21-50**

Manager Sutherland said this was to amend the codified ordinances dealing with the Engineering Department. Mr. Prosch had researched and put a lot of work into the changes and there was a lot of information, but was basically wanting to get the registration fees accurately locked into what they should be and some of the language that needed to be changed. Ms. Gordon asked what our stance was on posting building permits in windows, Mr. Sutherland replied that they were still looking into it, but the issue was that when people see a building permit, in the past it had been an open door for someone to break into the building. Councilman Martell commended Mr. Prosch on all of the work that he has put into this list.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1.

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

6. **SLOW MOVING VEHICLES (GOLF CARTS)**

CM-21-51

Manager Sutherland stated that the policy in place was for the Police Department to inspect the carts and issues permits for them, but there was no codified ordinance to allow for it. Captain Hedrich advised Mr. Sutherland of what Mt. Vernon had done and the language from the ORC. This would be for anyone that can operate a golf cart legally on certain streets. Solicitor Haas stated that this does not cover ATV's only slow-moving carts.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1.

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

7. **INCOME TAX BUDGET**

CM-21-52

Manager Sutherland stated that Auditor Williams had advised him that they need to have a public hearing at the next meeting. The Public Hearing and tax budget was something Council does annually.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1.

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

Mr. Dunne asked if the University had given the city the data visualization report? Mr. Sutherland stated that he had not seen anything yet.

Ms. Mosley stated that a lot of people didn't know about the Southern Ohio Forest Rally. There were a couple of people Travis Pastrana and Brandon that were in town that were known all over the world. She was in Columbus and a young man had been to Portsmouth three years in a row and said that he had been out in the Forest and there were very few people there. Mr. Sutherland said they weren't here last year but the year before they had their cars set up along the murals and had a big showing. Mr. Dunne said that he had heard about it after the fact and apparently it was huge. He said that we need to figure out a way to market it. Ms. Mosley stated that usually Lisa Carver from the Chamber puts information out.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m. on a motion by Vice President Dunne.

Submitted by: *Diana Ratliff* – City Clerk

For the full audio version of the Manager's Meeting, please go to www.portsmouthoh.org under City Manager 2021 "Audio".