

MANAGER’S CONFERENCE MINUTES
Portsmouth City Council Meeting on
October 26, 2020 – 7:25 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, City Clerk Diana Ratliff and Auditor M. Trent Williams. Solicitor John Haas was absent.

Manager Sutherland asked for another item to be placed on the agenda as CM-20-72 Fund Transfers.

1. **Authorization to solicit bids for supplies for 2021** **CM-20-68**

Manager Sutherland stated that this was done annually so that the city was prepared for after the first of the year.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

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

2. **Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis** **CM-20-69**

Manager Sutherland requested \$10,000 for a comprehensive housing market analysis. He said that several entities were contributing to this analysis. The City of Portsmouth, the Scioto Foundation, PMHA and SOMC would all be contributing \$10,000 each. He said that it was something that Council had previously discussed during the Master Planning process. Mayor Johnson asked if this went hand in hand with the Master Plan and Manager Sutherland replied that there were a lot of things that were discussed in the Master Plan and the lack of nice housing. Councilman Martell stated that the housing study should've taken place prior to the master plan and it would have been nice if the Master Plan had had the data that would come from the housing study, but to make a complete and accurate master plan, the data from the housing study could be added to the master plan. Mayor Johnson asked how it worked and Vice President Dunne replied that when you build in certain areas with quality low income housing or different types of housing developments, cities are eligible to get certain types of tax credits, but an updated contemporary housing study was needed and by having this, it would entice someone to build new housing in Portsmouth, because they'll have the tax credits to do so. Mayor Johnson asked if it was for all housing or just low-income housing, Mr. Dunne replied that there was a mix in which they would get certain forms of credit, such as 4% or 8% and if they built in areas that had the need, they would receive a larger tax credit which was quite the incentive for building new housing. Councilwoman Gordon asked if this addressed new builds only or if it addressed some of the blighted properties that had been abandoned and the city was trying to get Code Enforcement to have vacated. Manager Sutherland believed that it included all properties, he said there were historical buildings that need renovated and it would encompass the whole city. VP Dunne thanked the Scioto Foundation, PMHA and SOMC for partnering with the City and for Tracy Shearer's work on the project.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

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

3. **Coronavirus Relief Fund** - Was removed – it was added to Council's agenda **CM 20-70**

4. **Code Enforcement Spreadsheet and Data Visualization** –

CM-20-71

Manager Sutherland asked VP Dunne to explain. VP Dunne stated that it begins with the design and development of a spreadsheet for data entry for code enforcement such as complaints/calls etc. The spreadsheet would allow a monthly report of the types of calls such as: where they are in the city, how complaints were resolved and would allow for us to see the overall workings of code enforcement, the areas of the city that were most problematic and the types of complaints that were most common. He said that other cities used software to produce reports, they do a great job but they were expensive and the other cities were larger than ours and it was about \$1,200 per month. He said that they would finalize the price with Shawnee State and determine the cost per month, how many hours per month it would take to produce the report (Jan.-Dec.) and would include an annual report. He felt that the price would be substantially less than that and therefore would provide citizens and Council with a very clear picture of code enforcement and do so at a greatly reduced cost. He said this would start with Code Enforcement but could possibly be used in other departments. He was very encouraged by the interest of Shawnee State to start this new program and what it could do for the city. Councilwoman Gordon thought that it would be really good and knew that there were three-four properties that she continually received calls about and it would be nice to say that “yes” it had been reported and who she had spoken with and to know exactly what had happened with the complaint. She felt that the City Manager had a ginormous job and does an amazing job of crossing all of the T’s and dotting all of the I’s and getting so many things done but this would be one less thing for him to worry about. Mayor Johnson asked if Code Enforcement was willing to work with those that would be doing this and he replied that he thought that it would be a useful tool. Mayor Johnson asked if Code Enforcement was writing citations and Manager Sutherland stated that they had started writing them or at least as far as he knew, he added that it wasn’t only Code Enforcement it was the Health Department also. Ms. Gordon stated that they received a report from the Fire Department on how many calls, how many were broken legs, how many were heart attacks etc. and she felt that this would be a comparable report. VP Dunne stated that they were always looking for additional reasons for students outside of our city to stay in the area and attend SSU and contribute to the local area and hopefully stay local. He said one of the things it would allow for was students to learn about data analysis and visualization in something outside of a workbook and it showed a mutual relationship between the University and the City. Ms. Gordon stated that at her first Council meeting, a database had been approved for the Health, Engineering and Service Departments that would input data on properties and would be a tool that Police could use and if they got called to a property they would know if the water was shut off or any other reports or other issues with the property. She wanted to know if that was being used or if this information could be utilized into that system too. Manager Sutherland stated that it was still in the rough stages of getting all of that put together and they were working on it but it would be a while and he felt this would be a better approach and then work on getting the other software in place. Ms. Gordon stated that maybe when they’re developing this spreadsheet, they could look at the current database so that it could be put into a format in which the data could be dumped into it and would save on staffing hours in lieu of re-entering all of that data. VP Dunne stated that they would develop the spreadsheet based on what they had seen in other cities and work with the city departments to see how that worked for them.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

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

5. **Fund Transfers**

CM-20-72

Manager Sutherland asked Auditor Williams to speak about it. Auditor Williams stated that he had discovered a couple of deposits that were not identified correctly and needed to be moved by fund transfer. He said normally they do that throughout the year but if they discover it and it was a cost from one year to the next, that would require City Council’s approval.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

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

Discussion

Moratorium for New Institutional Care Facilities – VP Dunne stated that they had been speaking about the zoning updates after the completion of the Master Plan and the purchase of new properties to be used for institutional care facilities. They have explored putting a moratorium on those deals until the zoning updates had been completed and would also incorporate a policy for institutional care facilities. He requested legislation be drawn up to be added to the Manager’s Conference Agenda at the next meeting. He said what prompted the Master Plan was concerns by residents about a new institutional care facility and it balanced in a couple of ways. 1. He felt that people didn’t know everything that was going on in institutional care facilities, so there was a little bit of uncertainty and fear. 2. We could provide zoning that would be much clearer in what could be put into certain neighborhoods, whether it was an institutional care facility, industry or a commercial building etc. He felt that clarity would give residents a lot more security and confidence when purchasing a property in the city.

Clerk Ratliff asked if there was anything for Solicitor Haas to do research from and VP Dunne replied that West Chester, Ohio had recently updated their zoning back in 2016 and they had language specific to institutional care facilities. He said that the city might want to look into the group that provided West Chester’s new zoning.

Storefront Registrations – Councilman Martell stated that this was discussed at the last meeting regarding penalties for building owners who were letting their buildings sit empty and he included the city in that too with the Marting’s Building. He went over again how California had implemented penalties and the money was put into a small business fund that would help small businesses in that area. He said that Councilwoman Gordon had suggested curated storefronts like the City of Akron had done and there were many questions which would be covered in the Zoom Meeting next week. Councilwoman Gordon stated that many of the questions that they would be asking the City of Akron had already solved a lot of these problems that our city currently was dealing with and how to deal with the building owners, how to get access to the windows, cleaning the windows inside and outside, and preparing them to look nice as well as the upkeep. They were very willing to share the information on how they solved the problems. Mr. Martell stated that this was something that will take some time to be implemented. Ms. Gordon stated that starting with the Martings Building would be a good start and there was access and some of the issues were already tackled and a lot of these building fronts were beautiful at night.

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m. on a motion by Vice President Dunne.

Submitted by: *Diana Ratliff* – City Clerk