

MANAGER’S CONFERENCE MINUTES
Portsmouth City Council Meeting on
November 18, 2019 – 6:25 p.m.

Members present:

Sean Dunne	1 st Ward
Charlotte Gordon	2 nd Ward
Kevin E. Johnson	3 rd Ward
Jerrold Albrecht	4 th Ward
Gene Meadows	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.

1. **Health Department Advance**

CM-19-77

Manager Sutherland stated this was the annual transfer of funds to the Health Department, he stated that Mr. Smith was present to answer any questions Council may have. Health Commissioner Smith stated that this was either the 3rd or 4th year that they’ve borrowed because the grants were reimbursable on a quarterly basis. They are currently due the October payment but it couldn’t be guaranteed by the end of the year and Auditor Williams suggested proceeding with the funds being borrowed so that they don’t end the year negative. The 4th Quarter payment cannot be requested until after January 1st. He said that he hoped after 5 years that they wouldn’t have to borrow anymore because they’ve been providing the “Vivitrol” injections which was given to Heroin addicts and essentially blocks it so that the patient cannot get high from drugs. They’ve been doing approximately 80 shots per month and each shot cost about \$1,003 which the health department was reimbursed by Medicaid and each year he will ask for less until they don’t have to borrow the money ahead of time. He also said that fund 620 shows “Teens Linked to Care (PC)” but it should just be Primary Care and requested that the readings be waived. Councilman Meadows asked Auditor Williams if this ordinance needed to be done at the next meeting or could it be done at one of the meetings in December, Auditor Williams replied that it needed to be done prior to closing out the year. Mr. Meadows stated that he doesn’t want to waive the three-reading rule when there’s \$1,000,000 on the line. Auditor Williams explained that back in the days when the general fund didn’t have any money, the funds from the grant department were always coming in – in the red at the end of the year which was an audit violation. He said what had been done over the past 3-4 years and what was supposed to be done was to advance monies from the General Fund to the reimbursable grants to allow them to end the year with a zero or better balance rather than a negative balance. The Ohio law allows those transfers as advances to go into the next year as long as they’re repaid the following year. Councilwoman Gordon asked what the lag time was on the reimbursement? Mr. Smith said that each fund was different, about five of the grants pay out quarterly and two or three were monthly. Acting Mayor Johnson stated that he would like to know if last year’s reimbursements had been received before he votes one way or the other, Auditor Williams stated that he could get that information for him.

Councilman Lowe motioned to adopt alternative #1.

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

Manager Sutherland stated that he’s doing things out of order and would like to discuss the Tree Commission next.

2. **Shade Tree Commission Funding**

CM-19-79

Manager Sutherland stated that there was an issue with the Shade Tree Commission funding and an additional \$11,000 was needed to take care of tree replacement and pruning for the downtown area. Councilman Lowe asked where at in the downtown area, Manager Sutherland referred the question to Clerk Ratliff who said that it was in various places, Chillicothe Street, 6th Street, 4th Street and Court Street. Auditor Williams asked how many trees were purchased and she replied 19 trees and there was already one

that had been broken. Acting Mayor Johnson said he was a big believer in the Tree Commission as he had served on it for a couple of years, however the budget had always been \$5,000 a year and last year it was increased because they hosted the Tree City USA event. He said that he would like to have known that it was going to be more than the \$5,000 because he never seen it in the budget; he doesn't have a problem with giving this kind of a budget each year but he would like to see it beforehand. Clerk Ratliff stated that the Tree Commission picked up the cost on the pruning this year which usually comes from another fund within the city which was an extra \$3,550. Manager Sutherland said that he and Clerk Ratliff had discussed it and he thought that it had been included in the budget and it was an honest mistake. Councilwoman Gordon asked if this was the amount it would be going forward and Clerk Ratliff replied that "yes" the commission would like to see it increased so that they could cover the cost of pruning. She said that they won't be purchasing 19 trees every year but it would vary from year to year. There may be some years that the full amount won't be spent, but with the number of trees that were being planted it was crucial to make sure that they were pruned yearly. Auditor Williams asked how much the trees cost? Clerk Ratliff replied that it depends on the size of the tree but these were approximately 6-foot mature trees at a cost or \$250.00 each. She said that most everyone had seen the comments from facebook and some of the comments slammed the commission for paying that much for a tree, however these were mature trees and not little saplings that you can purchase from Lowe's "not knocking Lowe's" but these trees were not saplings but mature trees that were purchased in Portsmouth. Acting Mayor Johnson said that the focus wasn't just on the downtown and the commission had been involved in other tree matters? Clerk Ratliff said that they've been involved with trees in Tracy Park and they were working in conjunction with Shawnee State University at Greenlawn Cemetery to establish a GIS system within the cemetery. She said that there were trees in the cemetery that need removed because of disease or damage and the city needs to remove them before they fall because that would cause more damage to the gravestones. There have been instances in which people have called and asked about trees on their property and wanting the city to remove or trim the tree in the devil strip which is a slippery slope because that devil strip/boulevard area does belong to the city but it is the property owners responsibility to take care of the strip. You must obtain a permit in order to plant, trim or remove any tree that is located in that area but the permits are free. The city needs to know about any work in the devil strip ahead of time as it needed the commission's approval. Clerk Ratliff stated that she would like to see the amount remain at \$10,000 especially if the commission was going to be responsible for the pruning.

Councilman Albrecht moved to adopt alternative #1

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

Manager Sutherland ask to recess into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the tentative FOP Agreement and possible sale of property. Acting Mayor Johnson asked if the Manager could take us into Executive Session and Solicitor Haas responded that this was the Manager's Conference and he saw no problem with it.

Executive
Session

The role was called and the motion carried: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays, Council recessed into Executive Session at 6:49 p.m.**

Councilman Albrecht 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 7:43 p.m.**

3. **Tentative FOP Local #33 Agreement**

CM-19-78

Manager Sutherland asked Council to move forward with ratifying the FOP Lodge #33 contract.

Councilman Meadows motioned to adopt alternative #1.

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

Discussion

Possible Land Acquisition Portsmouth City Schools

Manager Sutherland stated this was for the possible purchase of land from the Portsmouth City Schools which involved the 6 acres adjacent to the stadium. He felt that the city needed to negotiate the terms but he would like Council's blessing before he proceeded.

Councilman Meadows motioned to adopt alternative #1.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m. on a motion by Councilman Meadows.

Submitted by: *Diana Ratliff* – City Clerk