

MINUTES – REGULAR SESSION

PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, March 23, 2009

6:00 P.M.

The City Council of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio met in regular session on Monday, March 23, 2009 at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

In the absence of Acting President David Malone, Councilman Mearan nominated Councilman Albrecht to serve as chairman of the meeting. There being no other nomination, Councilman Albrecht was unanimously named chairman. Councilman Albrecht called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag followed a moment of silent prayer.

Roll Call showed the following members to be present:

Mike Mearan	1 st Ward
Bob Mollette	3 rd Ward
Jerrold Albrecht	4 th Ward
John Haas	5 th Ward
Richard Noel	6 th Ward

Also present were City Solicitor, Michael L. Jones and City Auditor, M. Trent Williams.

Acting President David Malone's absence was excused, on a motion by Councilman Mearan.

Council dispensed with the reading of the Journal for regular session of March 9, 2009, on a motion by Councilman Mearan.

There was no legislation and therefore no remarks regarding same.

STATEMENTS FROM CITIZENS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Jerry Conkel – 2719 Sherman Road reiterated remarks he has previously made with regard to televising the Council meetings.

He also requested the "speed board" be used on Sherman Road.

Eileen Perry – 1410-16th Street inquired about stop signs being placed on Franklin Blvd. at 19th Street and questioned why they were placed there.

Ms. Perry also asked when the City was going to get stimulus money for street paving.

Wayne Nichols – 2018-18th Street again expressed his opinion that the Mayor should not be excused from a meeting of Council except in the case of a death or serious illness.

Mr. Nichols claimed there to have been a death as the result of a traffic accident at Findlay and 11th Street and predicted another one will happen. He asked that the traffic signal be reactivated at this intersection and vowed not to support any candidate for Mayor who does not do so.

Austin Leedom – 1551-5th Street felt "good things" are happening on City Council and claimed there to have been many years of hostility. He accused members of Council of using disparaging remarks and abuse of citizens speaking at the meetings. Mr. Leedom claimed citizens to not have suffered from that lately. He further claimed "we suffer from our local newspaper", claiming that in many instances citizens were blamed for any disturbance regardless of who started it. He felt this to have been "relieved" by an "honest reporter who fears only God and writes the truth as it is". He also felt the present publisher of The Daily Times "has allowed and encouraged truthful reporting" and called it "an improvement and makes for a better change in attitude and atmosphere". Mr. Leedom also noted a change in Council, saying, "Our present councilman is dignified, quite and runs a good meeting". He claimed citizens to come forth with "honest needs, pleadings and cries" – not to paralyze city government but to "encourage more activity and vigor to make the City more livable for all of us". Mr. Leedom continued saying "As City officials you have the right to make the citizens lives miserable but you also have the right to make them happy". He again reiterated previous remarks he has made with regard to backflow problems in the area of Grandview Avenue. He acknowledged remediation of this problem to be a "long time project" which he estimated to take as much as fifteen to twenty years but said everyone would feel better if they could see plans made and implemented. He also reiterated his previous remarks with regard to recreation and claimed the children in his neighborhood are playing baseball, football, basketball and skate boarding in the streets. Mr. Leedom's five minutes having expired, he took his seat in the audience.

Ruth Anna Marasek – 2309 Grandview Avenue, referring to a letter from Mr. Mollette, asked for a town meeting to be held to bring residents up-to-date regarding their flooding problems. With regard to any communications the City receives from Jane Murray and Larry Essman, Mrs. Marasek advised that they are “speaking for all of us, especially in the 5th Ward”.

Miscellaneous business and reports:

City Clerk’s Report

1. Received on 3/17/09, from the Auditor, the following reports for the period ending January 2009:
 - Combined mtd/ytd expense report
 - Mtd/ytd revenue report
 - Mtd bank report
 - Combined mtd/ytd fund report
 - Appropriation transfer from transaction listing
2. Received a notice from the Board of Elections that an estimated \$253.40 will be withheld by the County Auditor from the monies payable to the City during the fiscal year 2008 at the time of the first tax settlement in said fiscal year.

The Clerk’s report was received, filed and made a part of the record, on a motion by Councilman Mearan.

In their absence, there was no report from the Mayor or the Acting President of Council.

Miscellaneous business from City Council:

1st Ward Councilman Mearan extended sympathy to Kevin Johnson on the passing of his partner, Paul Johnson. Mr. Mearan recognized them as being a vital part of the community. He announced that donations can be made to Main Streets, in memory of Paul Johnson.

3rd Ward Councilman Mollette said he has reported a nuisance at 1542 Logan Street to the Mayor with copies to the Health Department. He noted the nuisance to be a vacant lot and suggested it might be property that the City would be interested in with regard to the City’s reutilization program.

Referring to remarks made at the last Council meeting concerning federal regulations with regard to public pools, Mr. Mollette inquired as to whether or not the City is complying with these regulations as they apply to McKinley Pool. He also inquired as to whether or not any Council action is needed.

Mr. Mollette expressed his belief that Council needs to consider his letter regarding the 2001 Storm Water Regulations and Strategic Solution. He felt there to be a need to communicate what is happening, noting one of the issue to be about how to avoid future flooding in basements. Mr. Mollette reiterated remarks he has previously made with regard to this issue and again suggested Council “require” a public forum “to disperse this information”.

Mr. Mollette reiterated previous remarks with regard to the removal of certain traffic lights and again requested a public forum be conducted in order for the public to provide input with regard to which intersections are actually creating problems.

Announced that he will be holding a “coffee and conversation third ward neighborhood meeting” at the public library on April 29th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

He expressed his opinion that the speed board should be set up in residential areas and inquired as to whether or not the Mayor is taking any action with regard to Mrs. Haider’s suggestion regarding a community garden.

Mr. Mollette thanked those citizens who attended this evening’s meeting.

4th Ward Councilman Albrecht reported that his ward’s concerns have been passed on to the appropriate department.

5th Ward Councilman Haas thanked the Mayor for spending two hours with him, this past Friday, discussing 5th ward and City-wide issues.

Mr. Haas, saying he is not yet ready to make a motion, noted that over the past few meetings there have been several speakers, with regard to “items not on the agenda”, who have approached the podium with notes while other have come to the podium and asked questions about issues that are a concern to them, asked Council to consider asking those people who wish to speak at Council on items not on the agenda to submit their comments in writing on the Friday before the meeting. Mr. Haas felt this would give members of Council and the administration an opportunity to address these questions at the meeting. He said he did not feel this would create a burden on anyone to do that and felt it would be something that would be helpful in addressing citizen’s concerns.

6th Ward

Councilman Noel said he has received more calls than usual, noting the spring-like weather has created more trash on Milldale Road. He acknowledged there to be certain garbage that the sanitation employees are not required to pick up but felt they should be required to stop and pick up cans and other similar garbage.

Mr. Noel, noting that he was of the opinion that the widening of the highway between Sciotoville and New Boston was to be done this year, said he met with Mr. Beaumont today and has been advised that this project has been postponed until next year. Mr. Noel said he met with an ODOT engineer in December 2008 and was told, at that time, that this project would happen in 2009, as scheduled. Mr. Noel said he was informed that the State is going to do the three bridges as planned.

The Solicitor, in response to Councilman Mollette’s question regarding the pool, advised Mr. Mollette that he has had some conversations with Mr. Murphy, the Service Director, and that Mr. Murphy is well aware of the regulations. Mr. Jones said he is confident that the pool will be in compliance and further advised that Mr. Murphy actually knows more details of this new law than anyone. He assured Mr. Mollette that Mr. Murphy is up to speed on this matter and will take care of anything that needs to be done with regard to the pool.

The Auditor, referring to a memo dated March 12th that he provided to Council, advised there to be a transposition of some figures in the appropriation ordinance. He noted this does not change anything and that the figures are correct in the budget. Mr. Williams requested Council to acknowledge that the figures were transposed when they were entered in the appropriation ordinance and to authorize the City Clerk to make the necessary correction to the ordinance. On a motion by Councilman Mollette the Clerk was directed to make the correction.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m., on a motion by Councilman Mearan.

City Clerk

Appointed Chairman