

CITY OF CLEVELAND
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 5, 2017
MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The City Council Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Cleveland was called to order by Mayor Shan Ash at 7:05 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT: Annie Sutton, Bradley Greene, and Nan Bowen. Edward Young was absent.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by Nan Bowen, seconded by Bradley Greene, in favor – Annie Sutton and carried unanimously, the Mayor and Council approved the agenda for the September 5, 2017 City Council Meeting.

CHIEF RICKY PRUITT – FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Ricky Pruitt, Fire Department, submitted the department's statistics for August 2017. The department responded to 41 calls within the city limits and 33 calls outside the city with 10 of the calls made outside the automatic aid area.

Chief Pruitt reported 670 activities January 1, 2017 through August 31, 2017. Of the 670 calls, the department responded to 297 rescue and emergency medical calls.

The Cleveland Fire Department assisted the White County Fire Department with a fire call to Friendship Nursing Home. Cleveland FD was first on the scene and knocked down the fire in little time. The staff at Friendship had evacuated the residents of the facility. Chief Pruitt stated it could have been a serious situation if the staff had not reacted in a timely manner.

Grant Keene, City Attorney, asked about the reporting of burning trash and if the department extinguished the fires. Chief Pruitt answered burning household garbage is illegal and his department will put the fires out.

GRANT KEENE – CITY ATTORNEY

Grant Keene, City Attorney, did not have any new business to report.

CHIEF JOHN FOSTER – POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief John Foster, Police Department, informed the Mayor and Council the department is now using tasers. All necessary personnel have been trained. Recently, officers had to use a taser on an individual fighting the officers and resisting arrest. The subject was in possession of 460 grams of methamphetamine.

Chief Foster expressed the need for a storage tank for fuel. With weather events that could cause power outages or fuel shortages, the city's public safety department needs an alternative fuel source and emergency storage. Currently the city is borrowing a 120 gallon fuel tank from an employee. P&B Petroleum can store and provide diesel. The tank will need to have a contained spill pan to avoid spills. Chief Foster is familiar with a place in Leesburg, GA that may be able to provide the tank.

CHIEF JOHN FOSTER – POLICE DEPARTMENT – continued

Mayor Ash reminded the group of the situation the city was in when the pipeline broke last year and there was a shortage of fuel.

On motion by Bradley Greene, seconded by Annie Sutton, in favor Nan Bowen and carried unanimously, the Mayor and Council voted to approve the purchase of a fuel storage tank with a spill pan in an amount up to \$2000.

On motion by Bradley Greene, seconded by Nan Bowen, in favor Annie Sutton, and carried unanimously, the Mayor and Council voted to approve the class request for Officer Kenneth Ridley. Officer Ridley is taking the class to become certified as a taser instructor.

TOM O'BRYANT – CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Tom O'Bryant, City Administrator, discussed the following items:

1. Downtown parking – Mr. O'Bryant provided information to follow up on the discussion of the issue of parking on the square. Mr. O'Bryant informed he had taken an inventory of the parking spaces available on the square. There are 53 parking spaces on the east side and 40 on the west side of the square. Although the parking seems adequate, it is greatly reduced when employees are using the parking spaces meant for customers and visitors. There are 83 parking spaces around Freedom Park and approximately 100 on the north and south parking lots of the courthouse.

A coalition of downtown merchants met and discussed the parking issue and decided to police themselves concerning employee parking. This action was very short lived as the issue with employee parking on the square is once again a problem. Now it seems, the merchants, are looking for the city to find a solution.

Mr. O'Bryant offered the following, but cautioned it would be costly to the city:

- Adopt a resolution designating the square as municipal parking
- Develop parking procedures to include remedies for enforcement
- Purchase and post parking signs around the square
- Police officer needed for enforcement
- Develop a structure for citations, fines and court proceedings

Mr. O'Bryant added other cities have ordinances in place to regulate parking. Dhalonega strictly enforces its parking policy, but Clarkesville has issues with enforcement and parking regulations are regularly abused. Regulating parking is not a definite fix to the parking issue on the square. There will be an expense and effort to enforce any type of parking regulations on the square.

Bradley Greene, co-owner Nix Hardware & Furniture and council member, expressed his frustration with other business owners allowing employees to park on the square. Mr. Greene feels it is a waste of taxpayer money and resources to hire someone to enforce parking regulations. Mr. Greene agreed with the assessment of the merchants association and police themselves. Mr. Greene feels the White County News did not adequately report the issue as it was addressed at the merchants meeting. Debbie Gilbert, White County News, replied she has reported the issue and suggested the city install directional signs for parking. Mr. Greene responded it is obvious where to park, especially for those employees that are aware of other parking alternatives such as Freedom Park and the Chamber parking lot.

TOM O'BRYANT – CITY ADMINISTRATOR - continued

Mr. Greene added he wants to see customers parking on the square and not employees. Mr. Greene has made a commitment to lead by example and not park on the square. Annie Sutton stated employers should direct the employees where to park. Nan Bowen added, as most businesses require, she is required to park away from her school entrance to leave parking for parents and visitors.

Ms. Bowen asked if it would be easier for the city to adopt a parking code. Mr. O'Bryant answered the city would need to inform the public and have a code in place. Ms. Bowen suggested the code include holding the business owner responsible for employees parking on the square. Debbie Gilbert expressed her opinion that business owners only think it's bad during lunch. Mr. Greene asked Ms. Gilbert to not downplay the situation. He sees a loss in business when someone cannot find a place to park. Ms. Gilbert stated the city needed a crosswalk at Deb's Dollar Store to encourage people to park at Freedom Park. Mr. O'Bryant responded there are crosswalks on the square and Mr. Greene added it's the same distance to walk to the existing crosswalk as it would be to cross at Deb's and then walk to the square.

The consensus is the city needs to communicate with the business owners and the merchants association to resolve this issue.

2. City staff have been trying to resolve the issue with the installation of the hydrants on Hulsey Road as part of the bypass construction. GP Enterprises (contractor) and GDOT installed the hydrants below grade. One hydrant is located 8 feet deep and is set in a manhole. Mayor Ash met with Senator Gooch who informed he would get with the GDOT engineers. Mr. O'Bryant followed up with Senator Gooch and was told GDOT has spent all they were going to spend on the project and the city would have to properly install, at its own expense, the hydrants. On motion by Bradley Greene, seconded by Annie Sutton, in favor – Nan Bowen and carried unanimously, the Mayor and Council voted to correct the installation mistake of the hydrants by GDOT. The city will purchase the needed materials and provide the labor for the installation. If and when phase three begins, the city will have to bring the hydrants down to the new grade.
3. It is time for the city to submit streets projects for the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) program. The city is eligible to receive \$49,080.56 in funding. Past projects will need to be inspected and approved by GDOT before a new project is funded.
4. The radar signs are in. Staff are in the process of activating the signs. Two will be installed near Truett's campus. Ms. Sutton suggested one be installed near Deb's Dollar Store.

NEW BUSINESS

1. On motion by Bradley Greene, seconded by Nan Bowen, in favor – Annie Sutton and carried unanimously, the Mayor and Council voted to provide police, fire and sanitation services for Pottery Comes to Town and Agri-Fest. The event will be held September 30, 2017.

NEW BUSINESS – continued

2. The Department of Revenue is offering a program to collect on delinquent court fines. Through the Tax Refund Intercept Program (TRIP) a state tax return may be intercepted to satisfy the debt to the court. The city will submit seven years of delinquent fines.
There is no charge for the city to participate, but will need to approve the memorandum of understanding. The city's delinquent fines is approximately \$79,000. This is not all city money as the city pays out to different agencies and programs (i.e. Law library, Joshua's Law, etc.).
On motion by Nan Bowen, seconded by Annie Sutton, in favor – Bradley Greene and carried unanimously, the Mayor and Council voted to participate in the Tax Refund Intercept Program. Mayor Ash was given authorization to sign the memorandum of understanding.
3. On motion by Nan Bowen, seconded by Annie Sutton, in favor Bradley Greene and carried unanimously, the Mayor and Council approved the minutes of August 7 and 14, 2017.
4. Public comments – There were no public comments.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Ash asked if there was any old business and Annie Sutton answered he is not here tonight.

1. The Mayor and Council decided on Monday, September 25, 2017 to have photos taken for the chamber magazine.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion by Annie Sutton, seconded by Nan Bowen, in favor Bradley Greene, and carried unanimously, the Mayor and Council voted to enter into an executive session to discuss possible litigation at 7:59 p.m.

RETURN TO COUNCIL MEETING

On motion by Annie Sutton, seconded by Nan Bowen, in favor Bradley Greene, and carried unanimously, the Mayor and Council voted to return to the council meeting at 8:44 p.m. No further business was discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Bradley Greene, seconded by Annie Sutton, in favor –Nan Bowen, and carried unanimously, the Mayor and Council voted to adjourn the City Council Meeting of September 5, 2017 at 8:45 p.m.

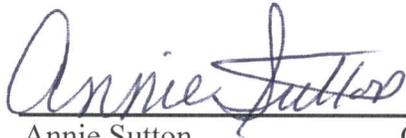
Signatures next page



Shan Ash, Mayor

(ABSENT)

Edward Young, Council Member



Annie Sutton, Council Member



Nan Bowen, Council Member



Bradley Greene, Council Member

ATTEST:



Connie Tracas, City Clerk

