

Vice President Murray called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. followed the Invocation, given by Mr. Murray and the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Clerk called the roll and the following Commissioners responded: Dennis Murray, Steve Poggiali, Richard Koonce, Kate Vargo, and Dave Waddington, 5. Upon motion of Mr. Waddington, and a second by Ms. Vargo, the commission voted to excuse Mr. Brady and Mr. Krabill. Vice President Murray declared the motion passed.

City staff present: Stewart Hastings – Law Director, Michelle Reeder – Finance Director, Aaron Klein – Public Works Director, Colleen Gilson – Community Development Director, Jared Oliver - Police Chief, Mario D’Amico - Fire Chief, Cody Browning – IT Manager, Don Rumbutis – IT Technician, Arin Blair – Chief Planner, Debi Eversole – Housing Development Specialist, and Cathy Myers - Commission Clerk.

Upon motion of Mr. Waddington, and a second by Mr. Poggiali, the commission voted to approve the minutes of the January 8, regular meeting and suspend the reading. Vice President Murray declared the motion passed.

SWEARING IN: Lucas Rospert, Fire Department

I, Lucas Rospert, recognizing my fundamental duty as a fire fighter of the City of Sandusky Fire Department, do solemnly swear to uphold the standards of my profession by safeguarding the lives and property of our citizens against the threat of fire and disaster. I promise to obey the duly constituted laws of the United States of America, the State of Ohio, the City of Sandusky and to accept the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, leadership, and trust to be honored for as long as I remain a fire fighter of the City of Sandusky Fire Department. I will continually strive to serve our community and to be an influence for good before my fellow officers and firefighters to the best of my ability so help me.

Chief D’Amico stated Lucas lives in Bellevue with his wife and newborn daughter. Prior to employment with the City of Sandusky he was employed by Huron Fire Department, Vermilion Township and was employed as a part-time Perkins Township Police Officer. Lucas and his wife spent a few years living in North Carolina before returning to Ohio and enrolling in the EHOVE Fire Program. Lucas has his fire fighter 1 and 2 certification; he is a certified EMT, and he will work second shift.

PRESENTATION: Housing Development & Beautification 2023 Review, Debi Eversole, Housing Development Specialist

Ms. Eversole stated that this program was created in 2016 to provide grant funding for property owners to make eligible improvements to their property. Additionally the program provides assistance to purchase a home located within the City. This is the eighth consecutive year that the City has offered this program and it continues to be a success. The 2023 proposed allocation was \$400,000 in total for which the City would allocate \$300,000 for improvements and \$100,000 for home purchase assistance. An additional \$100,000 was approved to add to the allocation for improvements increasing that budget to \$400,000 for eligible improvements and keeping \$100,000 for home purchase assistance for owner home occupancy. During the calendar year there were 137 approved applications consisting of 23 substantial redevelopment projects, 95 exterior repair projects and 19 applicants received home purchase assistance. Of the 19 homes purchased within the City, 16 (84%) were for first time home buyers, 5 (26%) of the homes were vacant prior to the purchase, and 5 (26%) that made the purchase were from outside the city limits. The average purchase price of homes that have used the program has risen to \$125,000 and 11 of the homes were code violations that have been remediated with the program. Private investments into these projects total over \$5.5M. Total investments for the eight-year program total over \$45.5M. Applicants do not receive the grant funding until after the project is completed and approved by inspection. Eligibility for 2024 includes those eligible properties be the applicant’s primary and full-time residence. The property may not be converted to rental (long or short term) for a period of three years of program participation.

The applications for the 2024 program will be available February 5th. They will be available at www.cityofsandusky.com/housing. Applications will also be available in the Lobby starting that date and Ms. Eversole will be in the lobby to answer any questions that beginning week. She can be reached at deversole@cityofsandusky.com, or by phone at 419-627-5832, or with Ms. Rambo at 419-627-5891.

Comments:

Mr. Waddington inquired if there were any applicants left from last year that would need to reapply. Ms. Eversole stated all were contacted from last year. They usually have enough applications in the first few days to commit to the program. Ms. Vargo inquired if there were repeat applicants, and can they apply every year? Ms. Eversole stated that the prior program allowed them to apply every three years, with 2024 it will be every five years. Mr. Koonce asked if the program helps those who are looking for housing or apartments in general? Ms. Eversole said currently that is not part of the program. Mr. Murray stated that imitation is the best form of flattery and we have seen several neighboring communities developing this same program for their residents as well. Mr. Murray stated that the housing shortage is not just a local problem, but it is a national problem. The staff are working with the Governor on several housing initiatives to attract developers to our area to develop low to moderate housing, it is a critical issue. Mr. Orzech commented that thanks to Ms. Johnson who asked about improvement to homes with code violations, funds have been set aside to assist homeowners with those issues as well. This year we will be focusing on home ownership to assist those who have invested in our community. Mr. Murray stated it is important to look over these programs and adjust them accordingly as needed, and to provide incentives to homeowners at this time is an important change. This year the program has a \$400,000 budget, the same allocation as last year.

PUBLIC HEARING: Rezoning of Cleveland Road Parcels, Arin Blair, Chief Planner

Vice President Murray stated that this issue presented as Item 1 on the Regular Agenda will be bypassed this evening due to the shortage of members at the commission table. This issue requires a six to one or seven to zero vote. This would be unfair to the applicant, since there are only five commissioners present. We will hear the presentation tonight but will hold the vote on this issue when there are enough staff at the commission table to do so.

Ms. Blair stated they are opening a public hearing for the consideration of an application for an amendment to the zoning map for parcel nos. 57-03358.000, 57-02994.000, 57-02885.000, 57-02989.000, and 57-04471.000 located on Cleveland Road from "R1-60" Single-Family Residential District and "R2F" Two-Family Residential District to "R-RB" Residential-Business District. We would ask that the commission make a motion to close this public hearing tonight and reopen the public hearing at the next scheduled commission meeting of February 12, 2024.

Mr. Hastings stated that this application came in before the Transient Rental Moratorium was put in place by commission, therefore the moratorium would not apply to this application.

With no further comments, **Vice President Murray declared this public hearing in recess, and it will be heard again in its entirety at the February 12, 2024 meeting.**

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Lisa Maczuga, 814 Bardshar Road, wanted to comment on the Housing Development & Beautification presentation. On the Housing Appeals Board they have seen a couple cases where the residents are on limited income (Social Security, retirement or disability) and cannot repair code violations because they do not have the matching funds for the grant. She hopes in the future something can be done to assist these residents. Mr. Poggiali stated he was in a meeting earlier with Ms. Gilson on some other issues and this same issue was discussed. He wanted Ms. Maczuga to know that there is a discussion now about ways of addressing that issue.

CURRENT BUSINESS

Upon motion of Mr. Waddington, and a second by Mr. Poggiali, the commission voted to accept all communications. Vice President Murray declared this motion passed. Vice President Murray asked if anyone would like any items moved from the Consent Agenda to the Regular Agenda. None heard.

CONSENT AGENDA

ITEM A – Submitted by Michelle Reeder, Finance Director (Second Reading)

APPROVAL OF 2024 APPROPRIATIONS BUDGET

ORDINANCE NO. 24-017: It is requested an ordinance be passed making general appropriations for the fiscal year 2024; and declaring that this ordinance shall take immediate effect in accordance with section 14 of the city charter.

ITEM B – Submitted by Jared Oliver, Police Chief

APPROVAL TO SUBMIT APPLICATION FOR THE 2024 STATE VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION GRANT PROGRAM

Budgetary Information: There is no budgetary impact as grant funds would reimburse any costs.

RESOLUTION NO. 003-24R: It is requested a resolution be passed approving and ratifying an application submitted to the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) for funding through the 2024 Violent Crime Reduction Grant Program for the Sandusky Police department; and declaring that this resolution shall take immediate effect in accordance with section 14 of the city charter.

ITEM C – Submitted by Aaron Klein, Public Works Director

APPROVAL TO SUBMIT APPLICATION FOR THE H2OHIO RIVERS INITIATIVE CHLORIDE REDUCTION PROGRAM

Budgetary Information: No funds will be expended for submitting a grant application. The estimated cost for road deicing equipment and incidentals is \$75,000.

RESOLUTION NO. 004-24R: It is requested a resolution be passed authorizing and directing the City Manager to file an application with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency for financial assistance through the H2Ohio Rivers Initiative: Chloride Reduction Grant Program; and declaring that this resolution shall take immediate effect in accordance with section 14 of the city charter.

ITEM D – Submitted by Aaron Klein, Public Works Director

APPROVAL OF 2024 WWTP SLUDGE HAULING AT ERIE COUNTY SANITARY LANDFILL

Budgetary Information: The estimated cost of disposal by the Wastewater Treatment Plant at the Erie County Sanitary Landfill for 2024 shall not exceed \$156,800.00, which will be paid out of the Contractual Services portion of the Operation and Maintenance budget through the Sewer Fund.

ORDINANCE NO. 24-018: It is requested an ordinance be passed appropriating funds for the dumping of Class B Biosolids (a.k.a. sludge cake) and other dewatered and compressed solids from the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) at the Erie County Sanitary Landfill for CY 2024; and declaring that this ordinance shall take immediate effect in accordance with section 14 of the city charter.

Upon motion of Mr. Waddington, and second by Mr. Poggiali, the commission voted to accept the Consent Agenda and declare all ordinances and resolutions as drafted and presented to the City Commission under the Consent Agenda shall take effect in accordance with the Section 14 of the City Charter. Roll call on the motion: Mr. Murray, Mr. Poggiali, Mr. Koonce, Ms. Vargo, and Mr. Waddington, 5. Roll call on the ordinances and resolutions: Mr. Murray, Mr. Poggiali, Mr. Koonce, Ms. Vargo, and Mr. Waddington, 5. Vice President Murray declared these ordinances and resolutions passed.

REGULAR AGENDA

ITEM 1 – Submitted by Arin Blair, Chief Planner (1st Reading - Request Passage of Either Ordinance 1 or 2)

AMENDMENT TO ZONING MAP FOR CLEVELAND ROAD PARCELS

Budgetary Information: The proposed redevelopment is expected to result in increased property and income revenue for the city.

1. **ORDINANCE NO. _____:** It is requested an ordinance be passed affirming the recommendation of the Planning Commission, denying the request to amend the official zone

map of the City of Sandusky to rezone parcel nos. 57-03358.000, 57-02994.000, 57-02885.000, 57-02989.000, and 57-04471.000 located on Cleveland Road from "R1-60" Single-Family Residential District and "R2F" Two-Family Residential District to "R-RB" Residential-Business District.

2. ORDINANCE NO. _____: It is requested an ordinance be passed overturning the recommendation of the Planning Commission; and approving the request to amend the official zone map of the City of Sandusky to rezone parcel nos. 57-03358.000, 57-02994.000, 57-02885.000, 57-02989.000, and 57-04471.000 located on Cleveland Road from "R1-60" Single-Family Residential District and "R2F" Two-Family Residential District to "R-RB" Residential-Business District.

ITEM 1 BYPASSED as stated above in the Public Hearing.

ITEM 2 – Submitted by Aaron Klein, Public Works Director

APPROVAL TO PURCHASE CYANOTOXIN TESTING EQUIPMENT FOR BIWW

Budgetary Information: The total cost for the purchase of Cyanotoxin Testing Equipment from Gold Standard Diagnostics is \$38,542.32 and will be paid for with Water Funds.

ORDINANCE NO. 24-019: It is requested an ordinance be passed authorizing and directing the City Manager to purchase a Cyanotoxin Automated Assay System (CAAS) Cube Automated Analysis System from Gold Standard Diagnostics Horsham Inc. of Warminster, Pennsylvania, for use at the Big Island Water Works (BIWW) Plant; and declaring that this ordinance shall take immediate effect in accordance with section 14 of the city charter.

Upon motion of Mr. Poggiali, and second by Ms. Vargo, the commission voted to pass this ordinance under suspension of the rules and in full accordance with Section 14 of the City Charter.

Comments:

Mr. Klein stated that this equipment is slated to replace equipment that was purchased in 2015 that treats the toxins from the harmful algal blooms that appear in Lake Erie and Sandusky Bay. The laboratory at Big Island Water Works is looking to purchase this, this is the only piece of equipment used in the State of Ohio for this treatment. This is our only option other than hiring a laboratory to treat this at the cost of \$10,000 to \$15,000 annually more.

Roll call on the motion: Mr. Murray, Mr. Poggiali, Mr. Koonce, Ms. Vargo, and Mr. Waddington, 5. Roll call on the ordinance: Mr. Murray, Mr. Poggiali, Mr. Koonce, Ms. Vargo, and Mr. Waddington, 5. Vice President Murray declared this ordinance passed.

ITEM 3 – Submitted by Jared Oliver, Police Chief

APPROVAL TO AMEND ORDINANCE 23-083 FOR PURCHASE OF 7 FORD SUVs FOR POLICE

Budgetary Information: The original cost of the seven (7) vehicles was \$288,930.88 and with the additional cost of \$6,638.40, the final cost is \$295,569.28 and will be paid with Capital Funds.

ORDINANCE NO. 24-020: It is requested an ordinance be passed amending ordinance no. 23-083, passed on March 27, 2023; authorizing and directing the City Manager to purchase seven (7) Ford Police Sport Utility vehicles from Montrose Ford of Akron, Ohio, for the Police Department; and declaring that this ordinance shall take immediate effect in accordance with section 14 of the city charter.

Upon motion of Mr. Waddington, and second by Mr. Poggiali, the commission voted to pass this ordinance under suspension of the rules and in full accordance with Section 14 of the City Charter.

Comments:

Chief Oliver stated the good news is we finally have new cruisers after three years. The bad news is the inflationary costs from the date we purchased these to the date of delivery have inflated the costs. He stated the program is to replace three yearly. Mr. Poggiali inquired what the life expectancy of a cruiser was. Chief Oliver stated that they try to replace them at 150,000 miles, we have a few that are at 200,000 miles.

Roll call on the motion: Mr. Murray, Mr. Poggiali, Mr. Koonce, Ms. Vargo, and Mr. Waddington, 5. Roll call on the ordinance: Mr. Murray, Mr. Poggiali, Mr. Koonce, Ms. Vargo, and Mr. Waddington, 5. Vice President Murray declared this ordinance passed.

ITEM 4 – Submitted by Scott Kromer, Streets & Utilities Superintendent

APPROVAL TO PURCHASE 2024 FORD TRUCK FOR THE WATER DISTRIBUTION DIVISION

Budgetary Information: The total cost for a 2024 Ford Super Duty F-450 Cab & Chassis is \$56,820.00 and will be paid for using Water funds. This purchase will be fully reimbursed by the motorist through an insurance claim.

ORDINANCE NO. 24-021: It is requested an ordinance be passed declaring a 2019 Ford F-450 truck, as unnecessary and unfit for City use pursuant to section 25 of the city charter; authorizing and directing the City Manager to purchase a 2024 Ford Super Duty F-450 cab & chassis from National Auto Fleet Group of Watsonville, California, for the Water Distribution Division; and declaring that this ordinance shall take immediate effect in accordance with section 14 of the city charter.

Upon motion of Mr. Koonce, and second by Mr. Poggiali, the commission voted to pass this ordinance under suspension of the rules and in full accordance with Section 14 of the City Charter. Roll call on the motion: Mr. Murray, Mr. Poggiali, Mr. Koonce, Ms. Vargo, and Mr. Waddington, 5. Roll call on the ordinance: Mr. Murray, Mr. Poggiali, Mr. Koonce, Ms. Vargo, and Mr. Waddington, 5. Vice President Murray declared this ordinance passed.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**DONATIONS**

- A donation of \$300 was received for Sandusky Transit from Vermilion Community Services Inc. **Upon motion of Mr. Poggiali, and a second by Mr. Koonce. The commission voted to accept this donation. Vice President Murray declared this donation accepted.**
- The Division of Parks & Recreation would like to thank Cameo Pizza for providing dinner for Out of School at Mills on January 17.
- The Division of Parks & Recreation would like to thank the Hall of Fame Barbershop for providing free haircuts during Winter Break Camp. **Upon motion of Mr. Poggiali, and a second by Mr. Koonce. The commission voted to accept these donations. Vice President Murray declared these donations accepted.**

NEW & OLD BUSINESS**ADMINISTRATION**

- We were saddened to hear of the passing of Walt Mathews, who was a member of the Housing Appeals Board. Don Sharrah, who is currently an alternate on the Housing Appeals Board, has agreed and will fill the remainder of Mr. Mathews' term.
- The City would like to acknowledge the compassionate efforts of resident Dora Grant and the steady pool of volunteers for their 8 day, round the clock efforts in providing a warm safe place for those needing shelter from the deep freeze and harsh elements this past week. Thank you also to New Jerusalem Church for providing the space to host this emergency effort as well as to the organizations, businesses and individuals that dropped off food and supplies.

FINANCE

- General reminder for property owners of vacant dwellings – if your dwelling is expected to remain vacant and unoccupied during the winter months, we highly recommend that you contact the City to turn off the water. This will help prevent your water lines from freezing and breaking, which would lead to costly repairs for the property owner. The Customer Accounting Office can be reached at 419-627-5893 to arrange for the water to be turned off.

PUBLIC WORKS

- Sidewalks at the Columbus Avenue underpass are fully open on both sides after approximately 15 months since the derailment.

- Asbestos abatement is complete at the Justice Center and the contractor is moving quickly through demolition and reconstruction of Phases 2 and 3.
- The outfall project on Monroe Street near Mills Creek is nearing completion with the roadway expected to be fully open in early February.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- On January 16th, the Public Arts & Culture Commission adopted the 2024 Public Artwork Plan, which is available on the Public Arts page of the city website.
- A survey is open to the public until March 1, 2024 to gather community input for the Community Development Block Grant Program's Consolidated Plan. The plan serves as a long-range guide for the program for the next five years. The survey can be accessed on the city's website, Facebook page, or paper copies can be obtained at City Hall.

SANDUSKY TRANSIT SYSTEM

- The City of Sandusky, Sandusky Transit System (STS) is requesting proposals from qualified advertising firms with experience in the marketing, service, and maintenance of advertising on transit vehicles. Proposals are due February 14, 2024 and information can be found on the City's website.

Comments:

Mr. Koonce asked regarding shutting off and turning water back on, are the costs posted on the website? Ms. Reeder stated that there was no cost to shut the water off but there is a \$30 fee assessed when they turn the water back on. She will look at adding that fee information to the Customer Accounting webpage. Mr. Koonce stated he had a meeting with Mr. Orzech and believed he is doing a good job, but regarding Boards & Commissions appointments he believes it would be better to have a conversation about those beforehand. He inquired if these appointments are announced at the first annual meeting to the public. He was unable to make the first Recreation Board meeting because of late notice and a prior appointment. Mr. Murray stated that it typically happens that near the end of the prior year the Commission Clerk or the clerk of that commission reaches out to those commissioners that terms are expiring to ask if they would like reappointment. Most boards have three-year commitment terms. Then we vote on those appointments at the first meeting of the new year to keep those boards & commissions functioning. Some appointments are by commission appointment, some by the city manager, some by the commission president.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Koonce brought up an issue and asked how to handle it as a city commissioner. He made phone calls to Mr. Brady and Mr. Orzech about this issue. At times a commissioner may have knowledge on how to eradicate an issue, and in this instance that was the case. There were a lot of downed trees and trash on private property right next to a playground. Mr. Koonce reached out to a person who was employed by the railroad and he thought he could do something about this issue. After talking with this person, he informed Mr. Orzech and Mr. Brady on how he handled the situation. He wanted to make sure that he handled this appropriately as a commissioner. Mr. Murray stated that he would try to answer this question, as he is going into his fourteenth year as a commissioner and has probably made every mistake possible in his tenure. He has called staff members without going through to the city manager and that can cause problems for the staff members or the manager. He stated what Mr. Koonce did was exactly right with one little tweak, to send it directly to the city manager and maybe/maybe not copy the department staff. We do not want to be in the way.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Nick Katsaros, First Energy, Ohio Edison, stated that he was the contact for the City if there should arise any issues.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Mr. Poggiali the Commission moved to adjourn at 5:47 p.m. Vice President Murray declared the meeting adjourned.



Cathleen A. Myers
Commission Clerk



Richard R. Brady
President of the City Commission