

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL

Held on Monday, May 23, 2011

6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of Sidney City Council was called to order at 6:30 P.M. Monday, May 23, 2011, with Mayor Barhorst presiding.

ROLL CALL

The following Council members were present and answered roll call: Mike Barhorst, Frank Mariano, Katie McMillan, Tom Miller, Mardie Milligan, Terry Pellman and Steve Wagner.

Also attending was: City Manager Steve Stilwell, Law Director Mike Smith, Asst. City Manager-Administrative Services Tom Judy, Public Works Director Chris Clark, Police Chief Kevin Gessler, Fire Chief Brad Jones, Parks Director Duane Gaier, Community Services Director Barbara Dulworth and Finance Officer Ginger Adams.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council member McMillan moved to adopt the minutes of the May 9, 2011 regular meeting. Motion seconded by Council member Milligan; motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

INTRODUCTIONS

Fire Chief Bradley Jones introduced the two new firefighters to City Council. On May 16, 2011, the Sidney Department of Fire & Emergency Services welcomed Alex Brahm (formerly with the Kettering Fire Department and Miami Township Fire Department) and Jake Coverstone (formerly with Vandalia Fire Department, Harrison Township and Butler Township departments). City Council welcomed them aboard by sign of applause.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

A-2681 AN ORDINANCE ENACTING AND ADOPTING A SUPPLEMENT TO THE CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE CITY OF SIDNEY, OHIO.

Law Director M. Smith introduced Ordinance A-2681 which provides for the codification of ordinances passed over the past two years by City Council. This codification will place all ordinances in proper sequence in the City Code Book and bring the Code Book into compliance with the Ohio Revised Code. Ordinance A-2681 will be presented for a second reading and adoption at the June 13, 2011 regular meeting.

RESOLUTIONS

25-11 RESOLUTION DECLARING THE INTENT TO APPROPRIATE BY EMINENT DOMAIN THE FEE SIMPLE INTEREST OF SEVERAL TRACTS OF REAL ESTATE LOCATED IN ORANGE TOWNSHIP, SHELBY COUNTY, OHIO

CM Stilwell presented a brief overview of the acquisition of Airport lands and easements as required in order to shift the east-west runway of the Municipal Airport approximately 1500 feet to the east. The proposed project has received the support of the Federal Aviation Administration. The lands acquisition is necessary for the physical improvement. The runway shift is designed to encourage enhanced public airport safety and designed to move airport operations father away from the populated area at the west end of the runway.

Councilman Mariano moved, seconded by Councilman Miller, to adopt Resolution 25-11. Upon voice vote, motion passed. Resolution 25-11 was adopted.

26-11 A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE INTENT TO APPROPRIATE BY EMINENT DOMAIN SEVERAL AVIGATION EASEMENTS LOCATED IN ORANGE TOWNSHIP, SHELBY COUNTY, OHIO.

CM Stilwell continued the discussion of the extension of the east-west runway at the Municipal Airport. These easements are entitled avigation easements and are important for those properties in close proximity to the airport. The easements are necessary to promote health, safety and welfare and eliminate possible conflicts between airplanes and improvements.

Council member McMillan moved to adopt Resolution 26-11. Motion was seconded by Councilman Wagner and approved unanimously by voice vote. Resolution 26-11 was adopted.

DISCUSSION – Street Pavement and Alternative Funding

A discussion was led by Street Superintendent Marty Keifer and PWD Clark as to the current condition of the City streets and pavement funding alternatives. Topics included in the report were methods staff uses to extend the life of the pavement; the asphalt overlay program, current pavement conditions, and financial constraints caused by the economy and petroleum costs.

PWD Clark presented Council with funding alternatives, including a possible levy for additional vehicle license tax for the 2012 calendar year, increase income tax rate and pursuing grants through the County Road & Bridge Funds and ODOT Urban Paving program.

Councilman Pellman expressed his concern about the City pursuing an income tax levy; he indicated that he was sympathetic to letting voters decide on income tax, the purest form of democracy. Clearly the City has done everything possible to provide services with less funding.

Mayor Barhorst commented that the one extra mile achieved with the additional funding is only a “band aid”; it is probably good for now. If the state cuts the local government fund, the City will need to look at something to replace it.

Councilman Mariano commented that he does not like the idea of a license tax, not a long term cure. He concurs with Councilman Pellman in that the public should decide if they want an income tax levy. He feels that if the city levies a tax it should be specifically for roads.

DISCUSSION – Financial Status

Finance Officer Ginger Adams presented a report on the 2011 financial status through April, 2011. She reviewed the strategies implemented since 2008, including service reductions and staff reductions. All City departments have been affected by the staff reductions; there is a limit to how long the City can continue to contract and keep providing the same level of services to the residents. Per Sidney’s financial policies, the budget balancing strategies include: reduce expenditures through improved productivity, shift expenses to third parties, create new service fees or increase existing fees, seek tax rate increases or reduce or eliminate services. It is important to begin the dialogue at this time in order for Council and staff to prepare for the 2012 City budget.

(At this point, meeting was relocated to the basement of City Hall to wait out the severe thunderstorm moving through the area.)

Assistant City Manager Judy indicated to Council that perhaps the staff will need to eliminate or suspend some programs, thereby doing fewer things but do them better.

Councilman Mariano noted that he feels the income tax levy is not the answer; would not be his first choice. He feels the City needs to dedicate resources to necessary maintenance and cut all non-essential services. The City should provide minimum service maintenance and show the public that all options have been explored; if needed, then go to the voters for a levy.

Councilman Pellman commented that an income tax levy targeted for specific areas of service (i.e. fire, police, streets) would have a better chance of passing than a blanket tax levy.

Council member Milligan concurred that the tax funds would need to be specific and the city adhere to that policy. If a tax levy is proposed, she feels Council should be supportive and “spearhead” the passage.

At 8:18 p.m., weather alert cancelled and Council returned to Chambers for the meeting.

Councilman Miller noted that it might be difficult to pass an income tax levy considering the current economic conditions. We need to show the public how the staff has reduced expenditures and sell the need for additional taxes.

Councilman Pellman concurred stating that the Finance Department presentation tonight was excellent and another example of why the Council meetings should be televised for the benefit of the general public. All of this information needs to be conveyed to the public.

Councilman Wagner noted that the staff report tonight “tells the story”; Council needs to sell it to the public.

Mayor Barhorst reminded Council that the residents elected them because they trusted them to make good decisions for the benefit of the community. He feels that a tax levy should be presented; if it does not pass; then cut all non-essential services and programs.

Council directed staff to prepare an Ordinance proposing a \$10 user fee. Discussion will continue at the June 6, 2011 workshop session. Mayor conducted a poll of Council re: vehicle license fee: Miller – no; Wagner - \$5.00; Milligan - \$10; Pellman - \$10; McMillan - \$10; Mariano – no; Barhorst – \$10.

Council and staff will continue dialogue regarding where we go in the future for financial planning.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Barhorst welcomed two students from Sidney High School Government Class; Alex Saunders (301 Edgewood) and Leslie Jones (823 Mt Vernon Place).

On behalf of Council, Mayor Barhorst thanked the Department of Fire & Emergency Services for their dedicated efforts on the recent river rescue.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

CM Stilwell reminded Council of the upcoming public meetings on the Wapak Road Reconstruction; meetings will be held on May 27 and June 2 for public information and input.

June 6th Workshop session will include the annual Capital Tour. Council is to meet at City Hall at 6:30 p.m., conduct a brief business meeting to discuss Boards and Commissions and then begin the tour around the community. Council members were encouraged to solicit volunteers from among their constituents to serve on the various Boards and Commissions.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:35 p.m. Council member McMillan moved, and Councilman Pellman seconded, to go into Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Staff members CM Stilwell, ACM Judy, LD Smith, HR Mgr V. Allen and PWD Clark joined Council and City Clerk Goubeaux in the closed session.

Councilman Pellman made a motion at 9:10 PM to come out of Executive Session and adjourn the meeting; Council member Milligan seconded and motion passed by voice vote.

The meeting was held pursuant to Sidney City Council Rules.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce L. Goubeaux
City Clerk

Mayor