

REGULAR MEETING OF CELINA CITY COUNCIL – April 22, 2024

Council President King called the Regular Meeting of Celina City Council to order at 7:00 pm. Council Members Baltzell, Buxton, Clausen, Fleck, Gray, and Sanford were present. CM Wolfe was absent. Also present were Mayor Hazel, Safety Service Director Hitchcock, Law Director Moore and Auditor Shinn.

CM Fleck made a motion to accept the agenda, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

CM Clausen made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by CM Baltzell. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0-1 Aye.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

President King reported on the Committee of the Whole that took place on April 8, 2024 to discuss the CRA.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Mayor Hazel spoke about Lakeshore Park being paved and how great it looks and that the weather helped get the project done earlier than anticipated as well as the new pickleball courts being paved. Mayor Hazel also spoke about the spring-cleaning trash pickup and how well that has been going.

Vance Cuthro from West Ohio Cap briefed the Council and audience about fair housing in Mercer County and what they are able to help with and how to contact them if anyone had any questions about fair housing within Mercer County.

AUDIENCE COMMUNICATIONS:

Matthew Overman who resides at 815 East Wayne Street spoke about the MAV Youth Ordinance that was going to council tonight and noted he did not understand why it was going to Council as it has not in the past for a similar event and Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted that last year Council changed what should be coming to Council for events in the park and that they need an insurance policy for this event as well as asking to rent some of the green space at the park and Law Director Moore noted that a benefit of having it rented and reserved means they are able to make it a private event where they do not have to allow all of the public to utilize their bouncy house.

NEW BUSINESS: (First Reading)

30-24-O: An Ordinance authorizing a Lease Agreement between the City of Celina and the MAV Youth Mentoring for the Lease of the Bryson Park District. Angie Nixon from the MAV youth mentoring program spoke about the group and what their intentions are and why they throw the event and who gets invited. Law Director Moore confirmed what the language should be changed to in order to accurately describe the event through the Ordinance and Lease Agreement. Council thanked Angie for the work that she does with the youth group and how important it is for the community. CM Sanford made a motion to amend the Ordinance, seconded by CM Clausen. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Gray made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Fleck. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Baltzell made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

31-24-O: An Ordinance authorizing the City of Celina to enter into a “Subrecipient Grant Agreement” with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (“ODNR”), acting through its Division of Forestry, to receive federal pass-through grants for the purposes of: contractual removal of high risk trees, tree inventory, tree plantings, staff expenses and public outreach, to appropriate funds, and declaring an emergency. Safety Service Director Hitchcock explained that it was a reimbursement grant so the City will have to pay the money first and then send receipts to the state. CM Sanford thanked ODNR for the grant and Mayor Hazel noted this is a boiler plate grant and if we want the grant we cannot change the language on it. CM Sanford asked if we had any ideas on what to use the grant for and Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted in the handout there is a page that states what can and cannot be purchased. Mayor Hazel noted that this is a federal grant and that the language for all federal grants contain the same language. CM Fleck made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Baltzell. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Gray made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

32-24-O: An Ordinance authorizing the Safety-Service Director to award the purchase of the dispatch radio console to P&R Communications, to appropriate funds and to declare an emergency. Mayor Hazel noted that this comes out of the half percent money. Chief Wale spoke about why the new radios are needed and how they will be used and what they are capable of doing. CM Baltzell noted that the current radios did not make it 10 years and asked if Chief Wale could speak about that and Chief Wale explained that they are just becoming outdated and unusable and predicted a similar life span for the new radios. CM Buxton confirmed that this was not a budgeted item and Mayor Hazel noted it was planned to be purchased in 2025 but with using the half percent money we thought now would be a better time since they did not make it to 2025 like anticipated. CM Gray asked about the bidding process and also about the validity of the offer since it technically expired and Chief Wale confirmed that he called and was assured that the numbers they are presenting are still able to be used for the purchasing of these radios. CM Sanford asked if these were all new radios and Chief Wale confirmed that was correct and that this purchase comes with five years of licensing use for the equipment and also noted that with a suspended Ordinance they are still three months out to receive these radios. CM Gray asked what would happen with the old equipment and Chief Wale noted they would wipe everything and then try to sell them. CM Sanford made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Buxton made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Baltzell. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

33-24-O: An Ordinance authorizing the Safety-Service Director to award the purchase of 5 mobile radios for the Police Department to Motorola Solutions and the installation of the 5 mobile radios to Parr Public Safety Equipment, to appropriate funds and to declare an emergency. Chief Wale spoke about the benefits of these radios and how the new modern radios with better programming can be more beneficial to the City of Celina and that there is a 10-month back order for these radios so we will probably receive them in 2025. CM Buxton noted that the date on the pricing has passed and Chief Wale confirmed they would honor the price as presented. CM Fleck made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Buxton made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Baltzell. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

OLD BUSINESS (Second Reading):

29-24-O: An Ordinance authorizing the Safety-Service Director to enter into a Residential Lease Agreement with St. John Lutheran Church for the purpose of renting the premises with a street address of 1201 N. Main Street, Celina, Ohio 45822, and declaring an emergency. Mayor Hazel spoke about the cost of the housing over the years and we have spent slightly more than eighteen thousand dollars since 2016 and that they will have money set aside for a new roof or any other expenses as they come. CM Fleck made a motion to pass to a third reading, seconded by CM Sanford. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0-1 Aye.

OLD BUSINESS (Third Reading):

25-24-O: An Ordinance authorizing a Lease Agreement between the City of Celina and Celina Concert Series for the Lease of the Bryson Park District. CM Baltzell made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Clausen. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

Law Director Moore spoke about the CRA and how council has made one change to the CRA and can make one more if they choose and remain a pre-94 CRA. Law Director Moore noted that he and administration were on the same page and to make everything clearer they recommend that everything gets abated as well as make it as retroactive as possible. Law Director Moore spoke about a school meeting that took place in 2018 that went into executive session and also noted that abating everything will take the guess work out of it and make it as easy as possible for everyone to be treated the same. Law Director Moore spoke more in depth about the 2018 school meeting that went into executive session and who attended and explained why there are no notes of the meeting and also explained what would have to take place in order for it to be an official meeting with the elected body. Law Director Moore also spoke about other cities and villages and how they go off of the ORC as well as local legislation which gives them some say in how they apply the CRA to their city of village. Mayor Hazel explained that they can allow all abatements to be approved and retroactively without passing any Ordinance. Law Director Moore spoke about some of the responses he received on a forum about how to interpret the ORC and the CRA and noted that he had a mixed review about how other cities handle the CRA. Mayor Hazel noted the great in depth work that Law Director Moore did and how it is important to address any accusation even false ones. Mayor Hazel spoke about the role that the County Auditor plays in the abatements because they can only get an abatement if it is determined that the new build increased the property value. CM Clausen thanked the Law Director for going through that and explaining everything to the public and being so transparent. CM Clausen asked who would be eligible for abatements and Mayor Hazel went through a list of possible abatements and what type of permits were filled out within the 10 years. CM Buxton spoke about a case in Dayton where a school is suing the City for the school not getting their taxes and noted he is not sure if it was commercial or residential and Law Director Moore did some research and noted that it is the result of a 1994 change the in law that the parties never implemented. Mayor Hazel asked Council how they feel about retroactivity for any abatements that did not go through in the last 10 years and Council felt they should be looked at again to allow retroactive abatements if it increased the property value under our current CRA. Law Director Moore noted the abatement can be applied with the new home owner if they have since sold the home. CM Gray asked to confirm that we are not making the school give back any money and it was confirmed it would affect future years and the school would not have to give any money back. CM Gray asked if another Ordinance for new builds would still be considered as a second change to encourage people to build in Celina and Mayor Hazel confirmed that if

Council wants that Ordinance it can be brought back as the second change to the CRA. CM Baltzell spoke about what would be looked at and what would possibly get the abatements and confirmed that we would be in support of retroactivity for these types of abatements. Scott Summer thanked the Law Director, administration, and Council for all of their research and input and apologized for calling anyone out publicly and noted he did not mean it in that way and did not mean to accuse the City of any wrongdoing and Mayor Hazel confirmed they will reach out to people who applied for permits and give them an opportunity to apply for the abatement. CM Sanford noted that the bill will eventually come due when it comes to the abatements and it will increase the property taxes after the abatement. Mayor Hazel spoke about how no new builds would be eligible for this retroactivity.

Mayor Hazel spoke about the Marshallese event that will be taking place on May 4th, 2024 and that it is an event welcome to the public and encouraged people to attend.

Chief Wale spoke about an event the Celina Police Department will be helping host that is about the dark web and teaches adults about some of the tactics people are using to try to take advantage of kids and how this is important and very informative and that the event will take place on May 5th at the County Fairgrounds.

Law Director Moore noted that he has always taken the sunshine law very seriously and will continue to do that.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:

CM Sanford noted that he has heard from many families that would like Council to discuss possibly modifying the codified Ordinances to allowed up to a certain number of chickens in city limits. Mayor Hazel noted they have information from other communities and agreed a Committee of the Whole would be appropriate and also noted that there has been request to have bees as well.

President King scheduled a Committee of the Whole on May 13th and 6:30 pm to discuss chickens and bees.

CM Buxton asked about the traffic study from the school and Mayor Hazel confirmed that they will be done in September and also noted that once the elementary school is not there anymore that should cut into some of the traffic.

CM Buxton also asked about an Ordinance that was passed at the last meeting to repair a dump truck but that he heard that the dump truck was already repaired before the Ordinance passed. Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted that was correct and that usually we move money within the accounts to cover the expenses and they decided to do a supplemental for this one and Mayor Hazel noted they have spoken to the department head about the optics and the process.

CM Gray mentioned a street light that has been put up recently and that it looks good and asked when it might be active and Safety Service Director Hitchcock confirmed that he will look into it.

CM Gray also spoke about the traffic light on Buckeye and Market only stays green for about 15 seconds and asked if that could be looked into as well and administration confirmed they would like into the time on the light.

CM Gray asked about the sidewalks at Lilac and Holly Street and noted that there are no off ramps for some of the sidewalks and that people are having to get off in the drive ways in order to cross and Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted that they will look into that. Mayor Hazel noted that we had a grant and get a lot done for handicap ramps done in the past and now that they are being brought up, we will gladly look into it.

CM Clausen noted that last big storm and asked if it was possible to have a company come and move the ponds to another area and Mayor Hazel confirmed they have looked at it in the past and are able to do that again. Mayor Hazel noted that it is a flood plain area and they have had studies done and that the majority of the odor comes from the wastewater plant but they will look into it and CM Baltzell noted that if it comes back and is too costly that they can put up a better screening or something and Mayor Hazel noted that they took the last fence down because the sides were eroding and Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted that they are planning on raising the banks of the lagoons which should help the 127 side.

President King spoke about the seeding of bare areas and how it would possibly interfere with the trash pickup and that they pushed it back a week to make sure the seeding will work as intended.

President King adjourned the meeting at 9:12 pm.

Submitted by Michael F. DiDonato, Clerk of Council



Michael F. DiDonato, Council Clerk



Jason D. King, Council President

I, Michael F. DiDonato, Clerk of Council of the City of Celina, Ohio, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of 4/22/2024, and were approved by Council 5/13/2024.

_____ Council Clerk