

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

MINUTES OF THE CITY OF BEDFORD HEIGHTS REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

APRIL 2, 2024

In accordance with Ohio Sub. HB 197, the City of Bedford Heights Council meeting was held via Zoom on the above date. Council President Tinker called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

All present pledged allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call: Mayor Stevens Councilman Anderson
Councilwoman Thomas Vice Council President Kelso-Perez
Councilman Willis Councilwoman Henderson
Council President Tinker Councilman Bounds

Absent: None

Also Present: Law Dir. Ridenour Fin. Dir. Gordon
Asst. Law Dir. O'Donnell Clerk of Council Stahl

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS NOT YET APPROVED:

MOTION by Kelso-Perez, second Anderson to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2024 Regular Council meeting as received.

Roll Call: Yeas - Anderson, Bounds, Henderson, Kelso-Perez, Thomas, Willis, Tinker
Nays - None 7 yeas - 0 nays
Motion carried

CONSENT AGENDA:

No items to consider.

MOTION by Henderson, second Kelso-Perez to move all Ordinances and Resolutions listed under Item 4; Consideration of Petitions, Remonstrances, Communications and Proposed Legislation and referral of same to Committee of the Whole for Immediate Action on the Council Agenda to Item No. 5.

Roll Call: Yeas - Anderson, Bounds, Henderson, Kelso-Perez, Thomas, Willis, Tinker
Nays - None 7 yeas - 0 nays
Motion carried

CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-015 (*First reading*)

Introduced by: Mayor Stevens and Council Members Tinker, Kelso-Perez, Anderson, Bounds, Henderson, Thomas, Willis

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 130.03 AND 130.04 OF BEDFORD HEIGHTS CODIFIED ORDINANCES TO ALLOW THE MAYOR TO APPOINT A FULL-TIME HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER AS WELL AS AMENDING THE COMPENSATION FOR THE POSITION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mayor Stevens asked if there is a reason why this has to go to first reading. He said that the salary range was established already when it was prepared and asked if there is a reason why it has to go back to Finance Committee.

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Bounds, Henderson, Thomas, Willis

A RESOLUTION AMENDING CHAPTER 174 MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX (EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2016) OF THE BEDFORD HEIGHTS CODIFIED ORDINANCES, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

MOTION by Kelso-Perez, second Thomas to suspend the rule requiring two readings.

Roll Call: Yeas - Anderson, Bounds, Henderson, Kelso-Perez, Thomas, Willis, Tinker
Nays - None 7 yeas - 0 nays
Motion carried

MOTION by Kelso-Perez, second Thomas to adopt.

Roll Call: Yeas - Anderson, Bounds, Henderson, Kelso-Perez, Thomas, Willis, Tinker
Nays - None 7 yeas - 0 nays
Motion carried

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, COMMISSION AND COMMITTEES:

MAYOR'S REPORT, Mayor Stevens: Mayor Stevens reported that there was a shooting that took place at a gas station in the city and the detectives are still doing their investigation. Also there was an issue at Camp Bow Wow, and then Monday morning we had an issue at Columbus Park. He said that he has never heard of anything of that nature taking place. He said that things happen in individual cities and some things you cannot avoid, it is out of your control so just try to be proactive as much as possible and do what is best to keep our city safe.

Mayor Stevens said on a positive note, we had our Lunch with the Bunny on March 13, it was a great turnout from 11-2 and noted there was a lot of great activities for the kids to participate in during that time. He pointed out that signs are out in the city regarding the computer roundup, it will start in April, Monday-Friday, branch chipping is going to take place on Monday, April 8th. He said tree planting will start in April. He noted we always receive the Tree City Award and was informed that we received this award again based on the things that we do to enhance our city with regard to the environment. He asked if there were any questions for him, there were none.

SAFETY COMMITTEE, Chairman Anderson: Chairman Anderson reported that the Safety Committee met on Tuesday, March 26th at 4 P.M., minutes forthcoming.

FINANCE COMMITTEE, Chairwoman Kelso-Perez: Chairwoman Kelso-Perez reported that we will be setting a meeting to go over the information for the Human Resource position.

COMMUNITY LIFE COMMITTEE, Chairman Bounds: Chairman Bounds reported that the city is ramping up for its summer camp program and seeking to fill positions to staff the summer camp, hiring part-time youth workers for a number of positions ranging from food service, camp counselors and a number of open positions. The salary range is \$15.00 per hour and the jobs will be filled between June and August of this summer. Applications can be found on the city website as well as at City Hall. If you know of a young person who is looking for a job this summer, this is a great opportunity to support the summer camp and provide some quality time helping young people in the area. The Community Life Committee will meet this Thursday, April 4th at 4:30 P.M. in the Caucus Room to discuss a number of items.

PUBLIC SERVICE/WATER RECLAMATION COMMITTEE, Chairman Willis: Chairman

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Willis thanked the Mayor for giving our Public Service report during his report. He said under Water Reclamation he will let Council know that we did dispose of a 2000 Ford Econoline van on gov.deals and received \$1,500.00 for that. He said he would like to schedule a Public Service Committee meeting for Thursday, April 4th at 5:30 P.M. via Zoom.

Chairman Willis said Civil Service Commission met on March 22nd and provided a brief summary of issues that were discussed including a letter accepting the position for the new plant operator, they also accepted a letter of resignation from a firefighter, he said their next meeting will be on April 19, 2024 at 8:30 A.M. via Zoom. Council President Tinker said you are having a meeting on April 4th and asked if the Law Director has enough notice time for the meeting. Clerk of Council Stahl said she would add it to the calendar this evening so there will be enough notice time for posting.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, Chairman Tinker:

Chairman Tinker said that he doesn't have a report tonight but said we have a lot of information to review and is waiting for the Director to get up to speed concerning all of the different issues that we need to discuss. He said we need to have a meeting soon and noted that we have to review Chapter 1179 Sign ordinance, we are looking to see if we want to do electronic signs. We have the Job Creation Tax Credits that we need to review to see if we need to make any changes to that.

PLANNING COMMISSION, Chairman Stevens: No meeting for April.

BUILDING & HOUSING COMMITTEE, Chairwoman Kelso-Perez: Chairwoman Kelso-Perez thanked Council for passing the SAFEbuilt legislation tonight, so we are now under contract at least for a year.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE, Chairwoman

Henderson: Chairwoman Henderson reported that at the last meeting on March 19th we authorized the advertising for bidding for some of the storm water issues that we have and we also authorized advertising for the asphalt program. As of right now, we are waiting for the status to see how that bidding goes. She said that she met with City Eng. Bierut today to look at a couple of catch basins on Solon Road and is hoping that we can add those to the project list. She said she knows some things are going to overlap with Community Life and Infrastructure but was very pleased to see that a bench at Metro Estates was replaced by the Service Department. She said that it is encouraging because even though it is a little thing, if we keep on making these small improvements here and there, it is encouraging. She thanked Council for all coming together so we can get this bench replaced.

LEGISLATIVE/EDUCATION COMMITTEE, Chairwoman Thomas:

Chairwoman Thomas reported that the Education Committee is picking up applications and said they extended the deadline for the scholarship applications and they will be picking up the applications this Friday, April 5th. They will review those applications at their next meeting which will be Wednesday, April 10th, Chaired by Michelle and they are scheduled for interviews on Saturday, April 13th at the Community Center. She said she sent an email to the Law Director regarding additional information that came out of following up from our last meeting.

Chairwoman Thomas said that our new Council members attended a meeting on Saturday, March 28th and the subject came up again about public meetings. There were also questions that came out of the community from our residents regarding ORC 121.22. She said that the question came up and asked if Law Dir. Ridenour is able to answer tonight, but wanted to make this a part of her report that we reached out to get more clarification on the ORC 121.22 which was effective July 1, 2022 that all public bodies should have resumed meeting in person. She noted that came out of the Attorney General Office.

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Law Dir. Ridenour responded that she read the decision that she provided regarding the open public meeting requirements and her response is the City of Bedford Heights has the authority to adopt a Charter and ordinances which govern the organizational operations of the city and Council including the time and place and the manner of our public meetings. Our code sections which determine the matter of our meetings supercede any state law regarding how our meetings are governed. It is called the Home Rule Law and based upon that whatever decision Council makes with respect to how they want to conduct their meetings, that is the decision that Bedford Heights Council can make, they have all authority to do that.

Law Dir. Ridenour said that this has been addressed by the Council more than once, since she's been here it is probably the 4th or 5th time that we have answered this question. Councilwoman Thomas said that she is new to Council and wasn't here when that history took place and there are residents who are not aware of that, so she thinks it was important to bring that out and have this conversation and get things cleared up. She asked Law Dir. Ridenour to explain the Home Rule and where we can find this legislation when our residents need to look for it because it is her understanding that Home Rule is legislation that needs to be written and documented. If we are able to direct our residents on where we can find that information, we can move forward.

Law Dir. Ridenour responded that Home Rule is under Article 18, Sections 3 and 7 of the Ohio Constitution and they talk about what authority cities have with respect to their meetings and anything. She said most certainly, cities do have the authority to determine how their Council, Commission meetings, any meetings, are governed and whether they are virtual or in person.

COUNCIL CABLE T.V. COMMITTEE, Chairman Willis: No Report.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, Vice Council President Kelso-Perez: Vice Council President Kelso-Perez reported that our Committee of the Whole will be Tuesday, April 16, 2024 beginning at 6 P.M. and the Council meeting beginning at 7 P.M. this will be an in-person meeting. April birthdays: April 3rd Dave Giaco, Service Dept.; April 11th John Williams BZA; April 13th Council President Alton Tinker; April 14th Police Chief Marotta; April 19th Councilman Willis; April 20th Joe Barber, Service Dept.; April 26th Renee Cole, Mayor' Administrative Aide.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: No Report.

NEW BUSINESS: No Report.

MISCELLANEOUS: Councilman Bounds stated that the Cuyahoga County Department of Job and Family Services are starting an initiative called Working the Community. They have taken staff members and placed them in different locations throughout Cuyahoga County to provide in-person services. He said during COVID a lot of services were done remotely, since COVID has ended, the Department has made great strides to be more connected with the community. He said that the Garfield Heights Library, 5409 Turney Road, every Wednesday between 9-3 there will be a county worker, sometimes two, to see residents in person to address their public benefit needs.

Councilman Bounds said approximately 30%(?) of Bedford Heights residents receive some level of public benefits, whether it is food assistance or cash assistance and they have issues in terms of renewals regarding SNAP skimming, there is a very large growing problem with skimming of SNAP cards that are used for assistance. He said that the federal government has taken great strides to try to address that and explained protocols if a person's card has been skimmed to recoup those losses.

Councilwoman Henderson said she is interested in started community walks and community hikes. She said if anyone is interested in joining her, please give her a call 440-735-7530. She noted the

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hikes will probably be for our younger residents because of the terrain but we can have walks on the flat land for our older residents. Council President Tinker asked if there is a specific date that you would like to do this. Councilwoman Henderson responded maybe once or twice a month, Saturday mornings, locations possibly meeting at Forbes Park and take a hike through that park or Reed Park and just walk through the neighborhood. She said that she is looking for ideas and support to help the logistics of it. Vice Council President Kelso-Perez suggested that you put that up in the Community Center and the Senior Office so they can announce it at the senior meeting tomorrow and people can read about it in the Community Center as well.

Councilman Willis announced that two food banks will be occurring in the month of April throughout the City of Bedford Heights. One on Friday, April 5th at Fellowship Baptist Church and there is one on April 20th at the Community Center. Mayor Stevens noted that they will be the third Saturday each month at the Service Garage area and they will change the location from 10-Noon.

Council President Tinker commented that as many people know his birthday is April 13th and he officially became a senior by age. He started getting all of these advertisements for seniors and announced the first one that he received is from the City of Cleveland, Mayor Justin Bibb, from the Cleveland Department of Aging who is having their 34th annual senior day, Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at Cleveland Public Hall from 11 A.M.-12:30 P.M. He said at 10 A.M. Information Fair, 11 A.M. Program, lunch at Noon and at 12:30 P.M. there is entertainment and all seniors are invited and it is a free event. He is passing the information on.

Council President Tinker announced that he is going to form a new Council committee, the committee is going to be the Grant Committee and will be chaired by Councilman Bounds. Councilwoman Henderson will be on the committee and he also will be on that committee. The purpose of that committee is to do some research for companies that write municipal grants and to bring their recommendation back to Council and the Mayor of which company we should look to hire to write municipal grants for the City of Bedford Heights. The time line on that committee is to bring back a recommendation by this September.

Council President Tinker said we have talked about the possibility of hiring someone to write grants for all of this year and noted that on Monday he had the chance to meet with the Mayor of Solon which hired a grant writing company. He had a chance to ask him a lot of questions and received a lot of good information from him. He is putting this committee together to select a company and put that on the committee to do the research and bring back some recommendations. He said that any Council members are welcome to come to the meetings and provide input, but there are only three members that are on that committee.

Clerk of Council Stahl asked if a motion is needed to request legislation to acknowledge creating this committee since it will be a Council committee. Law Dir. Ridenour responded she believes so, according to Section 111.20 all special committees shall be appointed by the Council President and Section 111.21 refers to the 14 committees we already have in our Codified Ordinances, so she believes we have to create legislation putting this new committee into the ordinances.

Council President Tinker said we need to talk about our summer recess. Typically we do our recess in August and he would like to have our recess in August, 2024. Councilwoman Thomas asked about the process for creating legislation, when it gets passed, and when it has to go through different committees. To create a new committee, wouldn't that need to go to the Legislative Committee first before we can make a motion to create a new committee.

Council President Tinker said that he thinks that the Law Director answered that question and referred to Law Dir. Ridenour for comment. Law Dir. Ridenour said according to Section 111.20 it

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says all special committees shall be appointed by the Council President. When something says shall, that means it must be, unless otherwise directed by Council. If the majority of Council did not want this committee, then they could possibly go against the committee, but according to our Codified Ordinances, the Council President does have the authority to create special committees. Councilman Willis asked this is just a special committee, so it will not be one of the standing committees correct. Council President Tinker responded that is correct.

MOTION by Willis, second Kelso-Perez to request the Law Department prepare legislation to create the special committee, the Grant Committee.

Roll Call: Yeas - Anderson, Bounds, Henderson, Kelso-Perez, Thomas, Willis, Tinker
Nays - None
7 yeas - 0 nays
Motion carried

Council President Tinker asked for a motion to conduct the summer recess in August.

MOTION by Henderson, second Kelso-Perez to conduct the summer recess in August.

Roll Call: Yeas - Anderson, Bounds, Henderson, Kelso-Perez, Thomas, Willis, Tinker
Nays - None
7 yeas - 0 nays
Motion carried

At this point, Council President Tinker opened the floor for comments from the public and responses were provided to each individual's questions.

Terri Honer, 5680 Columbia Drive, commented about a problem with three commercial vans being parked on Columbus at the intersection of Columbia, across from Columbus Elementary School.

Asst. Law Dir. O'Donnell referred Ms. Honer to report it to the Building Department.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by Willis, second Thomas to adjourn the Regular Council meeting at 7:47 P.M.

Roll Call: Yeas - Anderson, Bounds, Henderson, Kelso-Perez, Thomas, Willis, Tinker
Nays - None
7 yeas - 0 nays
Motion carried

APPROVED: _____
Council President Alton Tinker

ATTEST: _____
Patricia F. Stahl, Clerk of Council