

THE CITY OF HURON, OHIO
Proceedings of the Huron City Council
Regular Meeting Tuesday, January 12, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Call to Order

The Mayor called the meeting of the Huron City Council to order at 6:30pm on January 12, 2021 at Huron City Hall. The Mayor called for a moment of silence. After the moment of silence, the Mayor led in saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call

The Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll for the regular meeting of Council. The following members of Council answered present: **Christine Crawford, Mark Claus, Monty Tapp, Sam Artino, Trey Hardy and Joel Hagy**. Member absent: **Joe Dike**.

Motion by Mr. Tapp to excuse Mr. Dike from attendance at the regular meeting of Council. The Mayor asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll on the motion. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Tapp, Artino, Hardy, Hagy, Crawford, Claus (6)
NAYS: None

There being more than a majority in favor, the motion passed and Mr. Dike was excused from the meeting.

Staff participating in the meeting: City Manager Matt Lasko, Assistant to the City Manager Mike Spafford, Finance Director Cory Swaisgood, Law Director Todd Schrader and Clerk of Council Terri Welkener.

Audience Comments

- Brandy Frank, 318 Adams Avenue – Ms. Frank said that she and her husband, Austin, just moved back to his hometown from Kentucky and came to shine some light on congenital heart disease to Council and the community. They did not know about congenital heart disease two years ago. She found out while pregnant with their second child, Charlie, that he has congenital heart disease (“CHD”). Ms. Frank showed a picture of Charlie, who spend 9 days in the N.I.C.U. following his birth because he was failing to thrive. He heart couldn’t keep up with his calories – children with CHD struggle to gain weight and struggle to eat. Their heart works too fast and too hard so they feel to meeting calories needs. Charles had a G-tube surgery and wasn’t able to get his heart repaired until he hit 15 lbs. They are now facing surgery #2 and will find out more on this coming Friday. Kids with congenital heart disease don’t look sick – you won’t know that they have heart disease until they take off their shirt and you see their scars. They are warriors. Children with heart disease are 1% of all the babies born. There are twice as many children that die each year due to CHD than all childhood cancers combined, yet there is 5 times more funding toward pediatric cancer research than there is for heart disease. That is why she came today – she is asking for Council’s help in spreading awareness for Charlie and the other kids out there. Ms. Crawford thanked Ms. Frank for having the courage to talk with Council and appreciates the enlightenment. Mr. Tapp said that he wishes them and Charlie the very best. Mayor Artino said they would discuss this at another time with the appropriate people.
- Nick Katsaros – FirstEnergy – He has met many on Council before, but due to COVID, he hasn’t been here in about a year. He wanted to make sure that everyone knew who he was and to feel free to reach out to him with any FirstEnergy related issues, street lights, forestry, billing, storm, etc. His cell phone number is (419) 271-1313. If you can’t get a hold of him for any reason, Mr. Lasko knows where to get a hold of him, as well. He asked if there are any outstanding issues to be

addressed. Once spring and fall roll around again, he can get a map of where they are going so that the City can let its residents know if they will be affected at all.

Tabled Legislation

Ordinance No. 2020-17

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND PRESCRIBING THE MANNER OF SALE OF A PORTION OF HURON PUBLIC POWER SUBSTATION TRANSMISSION ASSETS, OWNED BY THE CITY OF HURON, LOCATED ON PPN. 42-00120.00 AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN EXHIBIT "A", AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE SALE OF THAT PORTION OF PROPERTY TO AMP TRANSMISSION, LLC.

There was no update on tabled legislation.

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance No. 2021-1

Motion by Mr. Tapp that the three-reading rule be suspended and Ordinance 2021-1 (AN ORDINANCE EXTENDING PAID SICK LEAVE AND EXPANDED MEDICAL LEAVE PROVIDED UNDER THE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (FFCRA) THROUGH MARCH 31, 2021, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY) be placed upon its first reading.

The Mayor asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll on the motion. Members of the Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Tapp, Artino, Hardy, Hagy, Crawford, Claus (6)
NAYS: None (0)

There being five votes or more in favor, the motion to suspend the three-reading rule passed and Ordinance 2021-1 placed upon its first reading. The Law Director read the Ordinance by its title only.

Motion by Mr. Tapp that Ordinance 2021-1 be placed as an emergency measure.

The Mayor asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll placing the ordinance as an emergency measure. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Tapp, Artino, Hardy, Hagy, Crawford, Claus (6)
NAYS: None (0)

There being five votes or more in favor, Ordinance 2021-1 was placed as an emergency measure.

Mr. Swaisgood said in 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, Congress passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which required employers to provide employees with 80 hours of paid sick leave for any type of COVID-19 related reason. The sick leave was in addition to the normal sick leave that is given to employees, so this would not affect employees' regular sick leave. Because of that Act, the City created a policy along with the Law Director and sent it out to the employees. Approximately 40% of the City's employees used this FFCRA sick leave in 2020, and there are currently some employees out on sick leave. The FFCRA expired on December 31, 2020, and Congress has not taken any action to extend that deadline. The administration is recommending to extend the current policy in place through

March 31, 2021, which is also in line with the City's legislation to suspend water shutoffs and waive late fees. In addition to the 80 hours that was in place in 2020, we are also recommending with this extension to add another 40 hours to the 80 hours, which makes each employee have access to 120 hours of emergency paid sick leave, which would be in aggregate from April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021. If there are any employees that were impacted and already used their 80 hours, it is more than likely that they may be impacted again. Adding another 40 hours is justifiable and reasonable. The administration feels that we don't want to put an employee in a place where they feel like they have to use their own sick leave if they are out for COVID-19 related reasons, and we would want to limit the risk of them coming in to work because they don't want to use their own sick leave. Fortunately, in 2020 we were able to use CARES Act funds, which are federal funds, to pay for this sick leave, which reduced our initial budget. Since the City no longer has CARES Act available, we will have to use our own local funds to pay for the additional sick leave. However, there is no immediate financial impact because it is in our budget as total expenditures will not be impacted. The only impact may be long-term, since employees will not be using their own sick leave and at retirement, the City is required to pay out their sick leave up to a maximum of 360 hours. The financial impact would be very minimal, if at all. Mr. Hagy asked if this also includes someone who has been required to quarantine even though they have not been diagnosed with COVID. Mr. Swaisgood said if there is any letter from a health care provider or health department requiring them to quarantine, they are eligible to use this emergency paid sick leave. This is exactly what happened with some employees back at the beginning of the pandemic.

The Mayor asked if there was any further discussion on the motion. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll on the final adoption of Ordinance 2021-1. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Tapp, Artino, Hardy, Hagy, Crawford, Claus (6)
NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority vote in favor of adoption, Ordinance 2021-1 was adopted. The Ordinance as adopted was signed by the Mayor and Clerk of Council and will take effect immediately.

Motion by Mr. Hagy to establish the 2021 transient rental registration fee pursuant to Chapter 1369 at \$400.00 per year, per unit, with additional re-inspections charged at \$50.00 each, effective immediately.

Mr. Lasko said per Chapter 1369.04 of the Codified Ordinances, the Council is to set the transient rental fee annually. In 2020 the fee was set at \$400 for registration and \$50 for any reinspection that would be necessary. The administration is proposing for 2021 that the fee remain at \$400 for registration and \$50 for any reinspection. The packet included a breakdown of 2020 actuals and a projection of 2021 at the \$400 fee, assuming we remain at 100 units throughout the City. Mr. Swaisgood put together a projection of what it would take to break event, which would be a fee of \$438.00. There is a loss of just under \$4,000 with a \$400 rental registration fee, but the administration did not feel that loss warranted an adjustment this year. There are also bed tax receipts that come in through the rental registration program that show that the program is operating in the black. The administration's recommendation is to keep the fee at \$400 and the reinspection at \$50 for one more calendar year.

The Mayor asked if there are any questions or discussion on the motion. Mayor Artino said that one of the issues he has is that we are charging the same \$400 for a small rental versus the much larger properties paying the same amount, and some people don't think that is fair. He wants to talk about where that all of that money really pays for. Mr. Lasko said the inspection is only one component of the transient rental program. We have a part-time code compliance officer that is tasked with doing those inspections, which covers the bulk of the rental registration fee. Behind the scenes, there are significant administrative duties undertaken through the administration, including the zoning administrative assistant and the finance

department that handles all of the billings for the program, as well as the City Manager's office. We do think going forward into 2022 that there may be some further discussion about considering a tiered fee structure. There are some economies of scale to be taken into consideration, e.g., if you are inspecting a duplex that has only one roof. For 2021, it is the administration's recommendation that we keep the fees where they currently are. As you know, we are going through some intense review of the existing ordinance over the next couple of months. We understand that is a concern, and we will be looking at the potential of a tiered fee structure in the future.

The Mayor asked if there were any other questions. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll on final adoption. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Hagy, Crawford, Claus, Artino, Tapp, Hardy (6)

NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor, the motion passed and will take effect immediately.

City Manager's Discussion

Mr. Lasko spoke on several topics:

- US Route 6. About 90% of the signage has been replaced that was incorrect as relates to the transition from the 4 lanes to the 2 lanes and the bike lanes. There are still a few outstanding signs to be added/replaced, but the majority were replaced over this past weekend. There are a few redundant signs throughout the corridor that we will remove, and there are couple of signs throughout neighborhoods warning of construction work. We did include a flyer in the most recent water bills requesting feedback from residents. We have a dedicated phone line for the bike lanes and the road diet. We will be documenting the feedback and sharing that with Council in the upcoming months. This phone number is (419) 433-5000, extension 1105.
- January 26, 2021 Council Meeting. We will have consultants from OHM present to Council and community what he would call measures of success, or lack thereof, on the corridor. This will be in addition to the community feedback and will entail objective measures along the corridor. Is it improving safety, is it reducing speeds, what's happening at the intersections where the light was removed at Berlin Road? OHM will be walking Council through some of those indicators we will be measuring during the upcoming months.
- February 9, 2021 Work Session. We are hoping to schedule a work session on February 9th with Council and the community on plans for Phase II of the Route 6 Project and some of the options that exist as we need to start zeroing in on finalization of the plan.
- Radar Speed Monitor Signs. These were discussed most recently at the Safety Committee meeting. These signs have been received by the City and during the week of January 4th those signs were installed along Laguna Drive. They are intended to both slow down traffic and to gather data on speeds along that corridor so that we can understand if there should be alterations to the posted speed limit. As you know, these signs have the ability to be moved throughout the City after we have pulled the data.
- Sawmill Parkway. We found out last week that the City's \$2 Million to the Economic Development Administration through their CARES Act Program was not funded. The good news is that the EDA has been aggressively reaching out to us to consider reapplying through their traditional EDA infrastructure programs. We plan to have a presentation to Council on January 26th that will look at what our options are going forward for Sawmill Parkway. There is a cheaper option where we could "top coat" Sawmill Parkway. That option will have shorter lifespan, with the other option being full reconstruction. The full reconstruction is what we intended to do and what we desire to do, but we want to update Council on what those project scopes look like and what the sources and

uses would be among those two options. We will be looking for some authority or signoff on what the plan would be going forward, and whether we want to delay a couple of months and attempt to apply to EDA one more time for the full reconstruction. Staff and OHM will be making that presentation to Council at the next Council meeting.

- Former ICA/Ardaugh. We are actively working with the new ownership group about plans for their property, both in terms of renovations to the existing property and potential expansion of the facility. They most recently went to BZA for approval of their exterior signage package last evening, which was approved, and we will look at going to Planning Commission later on this month for a preliminary site plan approval. We are very excited about that project – there is more to come as their plans are being formalized, and their commitment to a minimum of 200 new jobs into the community is great news, as well. There will be more to come on that project.
- Transient Rentals. This Council and the community spent a great deal of time in the fall looking at revisions to the transient rental ordinance and the potential for overlay legislation, as well, that may be specific and customized to individual communities. That was put on the back burner during the month of December, but believes we are slated for a work session at the next Council work session, which will both revisit the last version of the ordinance related to transient rentals, and the initial draft of overlay legislation. That work session will be held jointly with the Planning Commission and will start at 5:00pm.
- Parks and Recreation Department – Fabens Park Award. Sports Events Media Group is a leading national publication aimed at helping sports event planners produce athletic competitions within the US. On December 22, 2020, they recognized Fabens Park as a 2021 Leaders Choice Award winner, receiving third place nationally in the all-star outdoor sports venues category. As an award winner, Fabens Park and Huron will be honored in the February 2021 issue of Sport Event Magazine. Sports event professionals were asked to nominate destinations and sports venues that they believe display extreme creativity and professionalism for its youth and amateur sports, and the sports that the host. There were nearly 4,000 votes cast in each category, including an emerging industry leader in all-start virtual and live events. Sports Events Executive Director said, “It is my honor to recognize Fabens Park as a 2021 winner. During a difficult year in sports, you overcame obstacles with creativity and led the way for others.” I just want to acknowledge the tremendous work our Rec Department and staff, under the leadership of Doug Steinwart and the HJRD, for their work during the pandemic.
- ODNR Public Fish Cleaning Station. Staff continues to have conversations with ODNR about the potential for a fish cleaning station near the boat launch. The capital to build the facility would be covered by the State, with ongoing maintenance being handled by the City. Doug Steinwart and his team are currently trying to get an understanding on what those annual operational costs would be. We certainly know it would be a draw to the boat launch, and further enhance that asset and bring more activity. We need to understand the operational costs in terms of daily cleaning and minor maintenance to that facility. We should have something for Council’s review in the upcoming weeks.
- Utilities. The City is reviewing a proposal from Poggemeyer Design Group to update the engineering and construction drawings for the tube settler project at the Water Plant. Their proposal would provide for additional engineering, document preparation and construction observation for that project, which allow the plant to increase its daily capacity from 3.4/3.5 Million gallons/day to 5.8 Million gallons/day. We hope to approach Council at the next meeting with that design contract for that important project to increase the plant’s capacity.
- Water Rate Reconciliation. We have completed the annual water rate reconciliation with Erie County, where we take a look back at their previous year’s usage and put them into one of 30 tiers that will determine how much they pay in 2021. Based in their usage from 2020, they are at the top tier, and with the more usage you have, the lower your rate. For 2021 they are going to stay in the top tier based on their usage.

- Water Plant. On January 5, 2021, the laboratory at the Water Plant was surveyed by the Ohio EPA. This takes place every three years in line with the expiration of the licensures for the staff. All employees passed their certifications and operators Brandon Brown and Mark Jacobs were promoted to Full Chemistry Certification. Kudos to Jason and his team and to Brandon and Mark for those certifications.
- End of Year Financial Update. At the end of 2020 were in a good financial position going into 2021. Certainly, this was aided by the actions taken by staff and departments at the onset of the pandemic to tighten budgets and to make important cuts throughout the year. Because of that, we were able to transfer \$100,000 into the Capital Improvement Fund and the Economic Development Fund, which also was aided by the Bureau of Workers Compensation dividend that we received at the end of the year. At the end of the year, the General Fund balance is \$1.25 Million, which is right at the 25% allowable. The Water and the Fire Levy funds were 2-3% higher than projected at the end of the year.
- Water Treatment Plant Employee. We are starting the process of hiring an additional position as budgeted for. That posting should go out any day if it hasn't already, and that is necessary for the plan to move to 24/7 operation come May 2021.
- Planning and Zoning Manager. As of last Friday, we have posted the position for the full-time Zoning and Planning Manager. Those application are due to the City by January 29, 2021.
- Contract Negotiations. We have a very busy year ahead of us as relates to contracts and agreements. We have several of them coming up in 2021, including the contract with OHM Advisors for engineering services, renewals with Erie Soil & Water Conservation District, Chief Building Official and Inspection Services, Prosecutor, Huron Joint Recreation District, Fire Protection Agreement, Seeley Savidge Ebert & Gourash (Law Director), and all four of our bargaining units. This will certainly be a busy year as relates to agreements in 2021.

Mr. Hagy asked if the 400 new Ardaugh jobs are over and above the jobs that were there with IAC. Mr. Lasko said that the number is 200 new jobs, and that number does not take into consideration the jobs that were lost from IAC. That is the minimum they are committing to. He didn't want to sound too hopeful, but it is his hope that the number is significantly higher than that.

Ms. Crawford said that Mr. Lasko had touched on the Harbor North property in his summary, and asked if he has any idea of the new jobs created once they are up and running. Mr. Spafford answered that he believed it would result in 15-25 new jobs, and said that they will be meeting with them on Thursday on the site. Asked about MOCO, Mr. Lasko said that would result in the retainment of 33 existing jobs, but we also know that they are building a much larger facility than they are leaving, giving them significant growth potential.

Mayor Artino asked if there was any discussion about doing something different at the Berlin Rd. intersection. Mr. Lasko said he had a quick conversation with Mr. Spafford and Mr. Critelli of OHM Advisors – they are aware of the incident of someone driving over the curb at that intersection and that for certain vehicles that is a tight turn. We are not prepared to provide a resolution at the moment, but we did meet on Monday and we are going to revisit that intersection based on what occurred last week. Asked by Mr. Claus what type of vehicle caused the damage, Mr. Green answered that he believed it was a semi truck. Mr. Lasko said that vehicle also turfed the gas station's tree lawn, as well. We didn't witness it ourselves, but we have been told it was a semi/tractor trailer. He knows there are concerns about what some would perceive as the awkwardness of that right-handed turn as you are heading south, which we will explore. All indications are that it was a vehicle that shouldn't be going down that road.

Mayor's Discussion

Mayor Artino congratulated the Parks & Rec Department. Anybody associated with that department works hard to provide services to our citizens. He also thanked the Water Department – he appreciates their hard work, as well.

For the Good of the Order

- **Ms. Crawford** – Congratulations to Huron Parks. We've got some state-of-the-art recreational facilities here. We were recognized years ago when they opened the boat ramp as one of the top facilities in that arena – nothing but good things here. Her hat is off to all of those folks who make those kinds of recognition pieces happen. Reiterating what others have said about the guys in the Water Department – they are another phenomenal team. Her prayers are with the Frank family and all of the families in Huron and everywhere. This virus takes the forefront and then you guys are wrestling with your own situations. If everyone just takes a breath and remembers to be kind, we will get through all of these things together.
- **Mr. Claus** – Congratulations to the Water and Parks and Rec Departments. We all know what amazing jobs both of those departments do, although Parks and Rec is a little more in the face of the community. We have a busy agenda starting with the agenda at the next meeting going forward for a while here, and he looks forward to ongoing discussions and some resolution on rentals, overlay, etc., etc. He looks forward to a good year.
- **Mr. Tapp** – Thanked Mr. and Mrs. Franks for coming in and for the presentation. Our thoughts are with you, your family and Charlie – what a cute kid. He will try to get the awareness out. A couple of people have reached out about the speed signs that were put out on Laguna – they were very happy and very appreciative to the City and to Council for that. Kudos to the Parks and Rec and the Water Department. He is looking forward to a busy year in 2021 and hopes things settle down a little bit as far as the COVID. With that said, there are some citizens from town that have been hit pretty hard with the COVID – our prayers go out to those folks and he hopes everybody can stay as healthy as possible.
- **Mr. Hardy** – With regard to the vaccination process for the Health Department – we are in the fourth week of administering vaccinations for Tier 1A. We should map out this week with that, and then everyone is watching the Governor's messages about next week we start Tier 1B, which is the elderly and people with severe health issues. We are going to partner with the hospitals, and there are some other providers in the community that are going to be receiving the vaccine and administering it on their own. They should have information out Thursdays as to what it is going to look like. The bottom line is, anyone that wants the vaccine can get it – it's just not going to be immediate. We are working with the State, the CDC and Federal Government to get this done. Be patient – there will be more information coming. We are putting together a registration process to start getting the tiers on a rollout. The general public will follow later on. Mr. Tapp asked about the Governor's statement that 60% of healthcare workers had not received the vaccine, and wanted to know what the stats are here in Erie County. Mr. Hardy said that he thinks we are at about the 70% range – we are still working with the hospital to get their information and finish up Tier 1A.
- **Mr. Hagy** – Congratulations to Mr. Steinwart and his team – it's not often that little old Huron, Ohio gets national recognition that we deserve – great job Doug and team. He also thanked the Franks for sharing – he has been where they are and knows your fear and frustration. He also knows Charlie's courage and you will find that that's going to help you get through this. Thank you very much for sharing.

Executive Session

Motion by Mr. Tapp to move into executive session for the purpose of consultation with legal counsel regarding a pending or imminent court action and inviting Mr. Lasko, Mr. Swaisgood and Mr. Schrader.

The Mayor asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, he directed the Clerk to call the roll on the motion. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Tapp, Artino, Hardy, Hagy, Crawford, Claus (6)
NAYS: None (0)

There being five votes or more in favor, Council moved into executive session at 7:11pm.

Return to Regular Session

Council returned to regular session at 7:36pm.

Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Crawford to adjourn the meeting.

The Mayor asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, he directed the Clerk to call the roll on the motion. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Crawford, Claus, Tapp, Artino, Hardy, Hagy (6)
NAYS: None (0)

There being more than a majority voting in favor of the motion, the Mayor declared the meeting of January 12, 2021 adjourned at 7:36pm.


Terri S. Welkener, Clerk of Council

Adopted: 09 FEB 2021

Upon approval by the City Council, the official written summary of the meeting minutes will become a permanent record, and the official minutes may also consist of a permanent video and/or audio recording, excluding executive sessions, in accordance with Section 121.01(III) of the Administrative Code.