

THE CITY OF HURON, OHIO
Proceedings of the Huron City Council
Regular Meeting Tuesday, December 18, 2024 at 6:30pm

Call to Order Public Hearing on the 2025 Municipal Budget

The Mayor called the Public Hearing on the 2025 Municipal Budget on December 18, 2024 to order at 6:30pm. 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 for Public Hearing

The Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll for the Public Hearing on the 2025 Municipal Budget. The following members of Council answered present: **William Biddlecombe, Mark Claus, Monty Tapp, Joe Dike and Joel Hagy**. Council members absent: **Sam Artino and Matt Grieves**.

Swear in Witnesses

The Assistant Law Director swore in members of Council and Mr. Lasko.

Witness Testimony

Mr. Lasko testified as follows:

Most members of Council are either members of the Finance Committee or have attended the Finance Committee meetings over the course of the fall. I want to give a high-level summary of some of the highlights of the proposed budget for 2025. If supported by Council, we would ultimately look for approval of the 2025 appropriations measure, which is on the agenda later in the meeting (Ordinance 2024-58). I want to give some acknowledgments of the folks that helped to compile and review the annual budget – department heads, the Finance Department under Mr. Widman’s leadership, and the entire Finance Committee who vetted the budget over a series of 5 meetings in October and November of this year, which resulted in a unanimous recommendation from the Finance Committee to Council. In addition, the stewardship provided by Council and the Finance Committee resulted in an increase in the City’s credit rating, which I want to be sure to mention. This is incredibly important as the City goes out in the future for debt issuances, and for other types of public infrastructure improvements we may want to undertake in upcoming years.

As usual, the 2025 budget process included not only revenue and expense projections, but we also project those out through 2034, as well. Every Council member should have received a copy of the Budget Book a week or two ago. I wanted to note that, as always, we don’t just look at a 1-year budget, we look at 10-year projection for revenue, expense and capital projects. A high-level review of the budget shows that we are committed to spending \$53 million in 2025. \$6.6 million of that is from the General Fund, which is used predominantly to fund City operations. Approximately \$26.5 million of the \$53 million is geared toward capital projects, except we expect most of those funds to come from grants, low-interest loans or debt issuance proceeds.

Currently projects in the 2025 budget include, but are not limited to, the secondary intake for the Water Department, the elevated water tower on the west side, the east side sidewalk project extending sidewalks to Huron Green, the South Main Street Streetscape and Route 6 Phase II. It should be noted that the South Main Street Streetscape and Route 6 Phase II are going to be highly scrutinized in 2025 as we move through the 2025 calendar year to understand if Council believes it is the best interest, financially, for this community and this City to undertake those two projects. We are going to be doing a lot of investigative work January through April to look at the result of the income tax not passing and how that may impact our capital projects. Every capital project must come to Council. Just because it's in the budget doesn't mean that the project is going to move forward. Those will be vetted on an individual basis this upcoming year.

The capital equipment plan for 2025 includes, but is not limited to, lease-to-own 2 new police cruiser, 1 truck for the Water Department, replacement of 3 life packs for the Fire Department (split 50:50 with Huron Township), and the purchase of a front-end loader to be used jointly by the Streets and Water Departments.

Regarding personnel, we estimated a \$1.75 hourly raise for all employees on their existing base salary, with the caveat that this is only a one-time raise. We have on the agenda later one today our bargaining unit agreement, in which we usually lock in wage increases for 3 years. Because of some of the issues we are trying to eradicate with our healthcare premium increases experienced over the last 2-3 years, we are only proposing to lock in a 1-year increase for not just our administrative employees, but also all our bargaining units. Those will be reevaluated on an annual basis in concert with our healthcare premiums. As part of the 2025 budget, we are not including any new positions compared to the 2024 budget.

When looking at revenues, we are projecting a 3% increase to our income tax based on 2022 numbers. Why not 2023 or 2024? We believe those years are outlier years, with one being very high, and one much lower than the previous year. We are going back to 2022 and assuming a 3% increase. We will continue to monitor that going forward to see if that starts to level off. Therefore, we are projecting income tax of \$4.1 million in 2025.

I want to thank Huron Township for their continued support for our Parks & Recreation Department, as well as our Joint Fire District as they continue to contribute 50% towards all operating costs and capital equipment.

Looking at other revenue sources and how they are projected in the budget, starting with property taxes, we are only projecting a 3% increase at the moment. Those are the last numbers provided to us by the County Auditor. Although final number prove higher, we will not know that for a couple of weeks, so therefore, we are not in a position to assume anything higher than 3% in our current budget. What we did not include is a potential new sales tax on recreational marijuana. We know that the City will receive 3% of the new 10% state sales tax, but again, we have no direction or guidance from the State as to when that will be received and how much will be received. Therefore, we are assuming no revenue in 2025. EMS billings are projected to equal 2024 numbers. We undertook a rate increase midway through 2024, but again, until we see a full year of revenue, we are projecting EMS billings to remain the same for 2025 and

will reevaluate for 2026. We are starting to be more conservative on our interest earnings after record years in 2023 and 2024. However, we do anticipate those rates to start dropping in 2025, so we are very much more conservative in our interest earnings projections compared to 2023 and 2024.

We will be undertaking several rate studies in 2025. The first is our electrical rate study for Huron Public Power. We will also be doing the first of our triannual reviews for our water rates. When we approved the 10 years of water rate increases, we also baked into the legislation that we will review those rates every 3 years to determine if they should be adjusted up or down depending on operational needs and capital projects.

Staff and Council have committed to looking at capital projects and operations in 2025 to determine if major cuts to projects or operations are needed in the face of higher inflationary cost increases, higher interest rates for borrowing purposes, and the continued increases to our healthcare premiums.

In early 2025, we will need to determine a path forward, if we are still looking at ways to increase revenues, so everything is on the table in 2025. This could include reevaluating a restructured income tax ask, or looking at potential departmental-specific levies, as well.

Looking at our year-end for 2024, we are finishing in a strong position with respect to the General Fund. We expect the reserve balance to be about \$1.8 million, which is 28% of annual expenditures. The general rule of fund is to have reserves between 15-25%. However, due to inflationary costs, continued increases to some departmental subsidies and capital purchases, we anticipate the General Fund reserve balance dropping below the required 15% by 2027/2028. Mr. Lasko referred to graph depicting departmental budgets, which we continue to subsidize at increasing levels overlaid across the General Fund. As a caveat, this does assume that we are going to move forward with every capital project and every capital equipment purchase in our budget. What it clearly shows that at the level we are facing from inflation and departmental subsidies, we need to continue to find additional revenue or take drastic measures as it relates to our operations, services and capital projects.

As mentioned in past years, staff and Council will be putting a great effort into reevaluating capital projects and revenues to address these shortfalls in future years. For 2025, however, we are pleased to present a nearly balanced budget. We anticipate the General Fund to drop from \$1.8 million to \$1.7 million by the end of 2025, and that's assuming we maintain operations and move forward with those capital projects and purchases in 2025. As such, this budget was unanimously approved by the Finance Committee on November 26, 2024, and is presented to Council for consideration.

I just wanted to provide a high-level overview since most of Council sat through all the budgetary meetings. I am happy to answer any specific questions.

Mr. Dike asked what Mr. Lasko's definition of "drastic measures" facing us in the future. Mr. Lasko answered that, at the highest level and the ones that are going to save the City the most money, is we literally scale back most, if not all, capital projects. Those are the big-ticket items that, although we have been historically great at getting grants and low-interest loans, have General Fund dollars going into those

projects, even if it's a couple hundred thousand dollars, for example. That's some of the low-hanging fruit, if you want to call it that, that is going to save us having to put capital dollars from the General Fund into projects. From a capital standpoint, you go from doing improvement projects and basic maintenance. Instead of doing street reconstructions or new playgrounds, you are doing a band aid approach to things like street resurfacing, maintenance of facilities, recreational amenities – that is one option. Getting down to a granular level, which staff needs more time to look at and we agreed to do a public presentation in April, is looking at operations. Are there changes to services or changes to programs that are offered? That is what they would do as a last resort and would tackle capital projects first. Everything is on the table, and as we discussed during the income tax process, the City has a state minimum income tax and a 25-year old levy, and only 1 levy. It is unsustainable – it is either new revenue or drastic cuts to projects and services, eventually.

Mr. Hagy asked when we must make a decision, specifically the Route 6 Phase II designs – it was almost \$2 million. Isn't that happening in 2025? Wouldn't the decision have to be made in early 2025? Mr. Lasko answered that he and Mr. Hamilton have talked about this in recent weeks. The design is underway, or at least the survey work part of the design is underway. We would probably have to decide during the first 3 months of 2025. That's a project where he doesn't think it's staff's recommendation to scrap it, but it could be reduced to simple street resurfacing. In that case, we would lose half of our funding, but it would significantly reduce the cost of the project. I think we must make a final scope decision by February/March.

Mr. Hagy said Mr. Lasko had mentioned that it is anticipated that the property tax increase would yield a 3% increase – 3% of what? What's that in dollars? Mr. Lasko answered that he doesn't think the City doesn't bring in a lot in real estate taxes – a couple hundred thousand. Mr. Widman said that year-to-date, they have received \$350,000. Mr. Hagy said, so we're talking \$9,000. Mr. Lasko said they don't know the number for sure, so they can't budget for that. Mr. Hagy said he has had questions from residents saying the City must be getting a big windfall. Well, the big windfall is about \$9,000, as far as we know. Mr. Claus said the schools get a big windfall. Mr. Lasko said it is a big misnomer – people don't know the inner workings of where real estate taxes go. Cities or political jurisdictions are some of the lowest recipients of real estate taxes. Depending on the type of property in Huron, it is 7-8% of real estate taxes for the City. They are predominantly Erie County, the local school district and EHOVE that are the main beneficiaries. Changes to real estate tax valuations, although a positive impact for cities, are nominal.

Mayor Tapp said we do get a lot of grants and funding. We get a grant, we have some kind of match, and we must use the grant by a certain point in time. That puts a ding in the whole thing if we apply for grants for projects, we know we are going to do, or lose it. Mr. Lasko said that in past years, we have generally been very successful at not only getting grants, but we have been able to follow through with the projects. If you apply for and secure funding and cannot move forward with the project, depending on the funding source, that could be viewed when you go to seek funding in future years. A good example is Erie County, and I understand why. You are holding up funds that could be used for other projects. Depending on the funding source, it could negatively impact future projects. Mayor Tapp said that is one of the decisions they are going to have to make early on. Do we apply for grants only if we know we are doing something, or do we not apply for something and lose out?

Motion

Motion by Mr. Hagy to approve the 2025 Municipal Budget, as presented.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp, Dike (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor, the motion passed.

Adjourn Public Hearing

Motion by Mr. Biddlecombe to adjourn the public hearing.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor, the motion passed and the Public Hearing on the 2025 Municipal Budget was adjourned.

Call to Order Regular Meeting

The Mayor called to order the regular Council meeting of December 18, 2024 to order at 6:49pm.

Roll Call

The Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll for the regular meeting of Council. The following members of Council answered present: **William Biddlecombe, Mark Claus, Monty Tapp, Joe Dike and Joel Hagy.** Council members absent: **Sam Artino and Matt Grieves.**

Motion by Mark Claus to excuse Mr. Artino's and Mr. Grieves' absences from the meeting.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor, the motion passed, and Mr. Artino's and Mr. Grieves' absences were excused.

Staff in attendance: City Manager Matt Lasko, Assistant Law Director Gary Ebert, Service Director Stuart Hamilton, Police Chief Terry Graham, Parks & Recreation Operations Manager Doug Steinwart, Finance Director Ed Widman and Terri Welkener, Clerk of Council.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mr. Dike to approve the minutes of the Council meetings of September 10, 2024, September 24, 2024 and October 8, 2024, as written.

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

YEAS: Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor, the motion passed, and minutes were approved.

Audience Comments

The Mayor directed members of the audience having comments to approach the podium, state their name and address Council, and advised that they would have 3 minutes to make their comments.

Chris Blessing, Harbor House – We have always had issues with parking down there, and Mr. Murray has always been very kind to let them use that vacant parking lot. Now this property has been listed for sale. I am a little concerned about parking down there. I talked to Mr. Dike and Mr. Grieves about it, and they said to come down here and make it a formal address to Council. I don't know what options are available, but I just wanted to make a point to Council that it might be something in the future to worry about. We talked about some other locations for parking, but even with that, it's tough in the summer. We have people parking off the street blocks away and walking. I am here to address the concern and looking for some ideas of what we can maybe do.

Mayor Tapp said parking is a concern, and it has been a concern of Council for a long time. They are still looking at stuff. It's Mr. Murray's property, so he can do with it what he wants to. That is going to cause an issue not only for you, but the other establishments down there, too.

Mr. Blessing mentioned Mr. Ruta and his property back there. I think he has intentions of building out that area, as well, as far as some type of condos or residential stuff, which also takes both the east side and south vacant lot. This also takes away more parking. Mayor Tapp said Mr. Ruta has been in here, but he's not sure if that project is a go or not. They totally understand his concerns and they have the same concerns.

Mr. Blessing asked if Council has any ideas of a solution. Mr. Hagy said there were some long-term plans that directly addressed it, but he's not sure we can afford to do it anymore. Mr. Blessing asked about the Parks & Rec building being an alternative. Mr. Lasko said what he has learned to do is to not overpromise and put a time limit on anything, but they adopted the S Main Street Streetscape and are in the process of doing the engineering. As part of that plan, in addition to the sidewalk improvements and the amenity improvement, we look for ways to add parking, whether it be on-street or centralized parking. For example, for South Main Street, we looked at ways to add spaces on-street and we are also trying to talk to one private property owner about coming up with a shared use parking lot. A plan to be presented to Council in either January or February, called the Waterfront Parks Plan, looks at, in addition to Lake Front Park and some of the space by the Water Plan, the Showboat Property and the Parks & Rec building and

site. In that plan, we anticipate moving, at some point, moving Parks & Recreation, but keeping that building. If you demolish the garages, etc., he thinks it was create 30-40 spaces, which is significant. It all comes down to money in terms of where the City can move Parks & Rec, demolishing the garages and then improving the space. What he is trying to underscore is the City agrees the need is there, but because they can't control private property and what people ultimately want to do, they are trying to figure out how they can help with land they own or on-street. When they present that to Council, it is going to show 30-40 additional spaces at Parks & Rec, which is needed. We would not be reducing the spaces on the Showboat property, either. While not as proximate to Harbor House, it all helps. Mr. Blessing agreed, saying everyone uses it, whether it be the hotel or the businesses north. If that property sells to a private developer, you are looking at losing 40-50 spaced on that particular property. That would be an exchange of spaces.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Resolution No. 99-2024

Motion by Mr. Dike that the three-reading rule be waived and Resolution 99-2024 (A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF HURON, OHIO, WITH THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE/OLC/PATROL OFFICERS FOR THE CONTRACT PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2025 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2027) be placed on its first reading.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp (5)
NAYS: None (0)

There being five or more votes in favor, the motion passed, and Resolution No. 99-2024 was placed upon its first reading. The Assistant Law Director read the Ordinance by its title only.

Mr. Lasko addressed Resolutions 99-2024 and 100-2024 together, since the changes to the contracts are fairly identical. He acknowledged and thanked Chief Graham, Andrea Rocco, Mr. Orzech, Mr. Clayman and Mr. Boesch, who were negotiating on behalf of Sergeants and Patrol Officers. What's being proposed is a 3-year contract from 2025-2027. What's really important with these contracts, and you will see in all of our contracts, is that although they are 3 years, they are going to have wage and healthcare reopeners for 2026 and 2027. There was no way they felt the City could commit to any type of wage increase (or lack thereof) without knowing what our healthcare premiums are given what we've experienced the last couple of years. We are very appreciative of our bargaining units for understanding that, and that it was in everyone's best interest to tie wages to whatever happens with healthcare in years 2 and 3 of the contract. We are moving the 12-hour shift MOU, entered into in July or August of this year, a part of the contract. However, he acknowledged that the Chief has unilateral right to change from 12-hour shifts to 10 or 8-hour shifts if they believe that's in the best interest operationally for the Department. As relates

to wage increases, they did a modest equity adjustment of a couple of cents to get police back to level with fire. For whatever reason, police was a couple cents below fire in their steps. Once that adjustment was made, they did a \$1.75 bump to the base. In addition, they did a small alteration to the longevity calculation. Instead of 5 steps, it is now 6 steps, and we moved from a static dollar amount to a percentage, which goes from 1% to 6%, depending on what step you are on based on years of service. We increased the uniform allowance from \$1,000 to \$1,100 per year. We also took the K-9 MOU and made that contract language. We increased the employee contribution percentage for healthcare premium costs from 5% to 6%. We are also changing from a health reimbursement account to a health savings account, in which the City will provide money deposited into staff's accounts at the beginning of the calendar year for them to use for their medical expenses. The contracts are nearly identical proposals between Patrol Officers and Sergeants.

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

YEAS: Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor, Resolution No. 99-2024 was adopted. The Resolution as adopted was signed by the Mayor and Clerk of Council and will take effect immediately.

Resolution No. 100-2024

Motion by Mr. Dike that the three-reading rule be waived and Resolution No. 100-2024 (A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF HURON, OHIO, WITH THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE/OLC/SERGEANTS FOR THE CONTRACT PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2025 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2027) be placed on its first reading.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being five or more votes in favor, the motion passed, and Resolution No. 100-2024 was placed upon its first reading. The Assistant Law Director read the Resolution by its title only.

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

YEAS: Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor, Resolution No. 100-2024 was adopted. The Resolution as adopted was signed by the Mayor and Clerk of Council and will take effect immediately.

Resolution No. 102-2024

Motion by Mr. Hagy that the three-reading rule be waived and Resolution 102-2024 (A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A LABOR AGREEMENT WITH THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES, LOCAL 2024, AND OHIO COUNCIL 8, FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2025 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2027) be placed on its first reading.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp, Dike (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being five or more votes in favor, the motion passed, and Resolution No. 102-2024 was placed upon its first reading. The Assistant Law Director read the Ordinance by its title only.

Mr. Lasko wanted to acknowledge the work of Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Evans and Ms. Rocco on the City side, and Mr. Clayman and Mr. Baum on behalf of AFSCME and their membership. Relevant changes to their contract, several of which align with what was done with Patrol Officers and Sergeants, include:

- This, too is a 3-year contract with automatic reopeners for 2026 and 2027 for healthcare and wages;
- All AFSCME will be getting \$1.75 bump to their base pay.
- We increased the employee contribution to healthcare premiums from 5% to 6%
- Moving from an HRA to an HSA;
- We removed the finance position from the bargaining unit, which was a change made earlier in the year;
- Changing the schedule in the Water Plant to eliminate a divided 4-hour Wednesday shift;
- Made modest increases to license premiums for any licensures people have;
- Added a license premium for CDL because this is something a lot of cities need and they are hard to achieve.

The Mayor asked if there were further questions. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll on final adoption of Resolution No. 102-2024. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp, Dike (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being more than a majority in favor of adoption, Resolution No. 102-2024 was adopted. The Resolution as adopted was signed by the Mayor and Clerk of Council and will take effect immediately.

Ordinance No. 2024-54

Motion by Mr. Claus that the three-reading rule be waived and Ordinance No. 2024-54 (AN ORDINANCE AMENDING HURON CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 161.04 (A), EXHIBIT "A" POSITION AND SALARY SCHEDULE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY) be placed on its first reading.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being five or more votes in favor, the motion passed, and Ordinance No. 2024-54 was placed upon its first reading. The Assistant Law Director read the Ordinance by its title only.

Motion by Mr. Claus to place Ordinance No. 2024-54 as an emergency measure.

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

YEAS: Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being five or more votes in favor, the motion passed, and Ordinance No. 2024-54 was placed as an emergency measure.

Mr. Lasko said that he would be addressing Ordinance Nos. 2024-54 and 2024-55 collectively. These are the modification to our codified salary schedules that we do annually. Ordinance No. 2024-54 is for the majority of our staff, while Ordinance No. 2025-55 is for our chartered officers. We have to amend the salary schedule based on wage increases for individuals identified in the salary schedules. We are providing and recommending salary increases for positions in those salary schedules that match what the bargaining units received. We need to adjust the ranges for everyone in the salary schedule, and as relates to the minimum wage, we are increasing that from \$10.45 to \$10.70 based on State of Ohio's recent increase to the state minimum wage.

The Mayor asked if there were further questions. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll on final adoption of Ordinance No. 2024-54. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being more than a majority in favor of adoption, Ordinance No. 2024-54 was adopted. The Ordinance as adopted was signed by the Mayor and Clerk of Council and will take effect immediately.

Ordinance No. 2024-55

Motion by Mr. Claus that the three-reading rule be waived and Ordinance No. 2024-55 (AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 161.04.1 OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY) be placed on its first reading.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe (5)
NAYS: None (0)

There being five or more votes in favor, the motion passed, and Ordinance No. 2024-55 was placed upon its first reading. The Assistant Law Director read the Ordinance by its title only.

Motion by Mr. Claus to place Ordinance No. 2024-55 as an emergency measure.

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

YEAS: Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe (5)
NAYS: None (0)

There being five or more votes in favor, the motion passed, and Ordinance No. 2024-55 was placed as an emergency measure.

The Mayor asked if there were further questions. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll on final adoption of Ordinance No. 2024-55. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe (5)
NAYS: None (0)

There being more than a majority in favor of adoption, Ordinance No. 2024-55 was adopted. The Ordinance as adopted was signed by the Mayor and Clerk of Council and will take effect immediately.

Ordinance No. 2024-56

Motion by Mr. Biddlecombe that Ordinance No. 2024-56 (AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 1131 (LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS) OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF HURON, OHIO TO ESTABLISH A NEW SECTION 1131.11 (OUTDOOR LIGHTING REGULATIONS) be placed on its first reading.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy (5)
NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor, the motion passed, and Ordinance No. 2024-56 was placed upon its first reading. The Assistant Law Director read the Ordinance by its title only.

Mr. Waters explained that this Ordinance establishes a new Section 1131.11 Outdoor Lighting Regulations to address both new and existing lighting on residential properties. Its purpose is to address some reported issues of light trespass. It's not intended to be proactive measure to regulate existing lighting. It has two sections, the first applying to all lighting, both new and existing. This reads that, "lighting shall not be directed at the property of another or unreasonably shine, glare, reflect or project on the property of another." This matches the recent changes made to the Criminal Mischief statute, Section 541.04. It applies to all lighting. Any lighting that is not fully shielded is to be turned off between 9pm and sunrise, except if used for security purposes or to light walkways or roadways, in which case they have to have a motion detector. The use of flashing lighting or rotating lighting is prohibited unless the lumens are low enough (equal to about 17watts, which would cover Christmas lighting and things of that nature).

For any new light installed, it has to be fully shielded, which means it has to be directed below the horizontal. That rule does not apply to Christmas lighting or lumens between 60-70 watts, in which case they have to be partially shielded. It does not apply to light fixtures that are shined on the sides of building or landscaping plantings, etc.

Mr. Claus asked if "fully shielded" and "partially shielded" are defined in the ordinance. Mr. Waters said they were both defined. Fully shielded means a quality if light fixture where light is emitted therefrom projected below the horizontal (downward, not up or sideways).

The Mayor asked if there were further questions. There were none.

Ordinance No. 2024-57

Motion by Mr. Hagy that the three-reading rule be waived and Ordinance No. 2024-57 (AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2023-49, ADOPTED ON DECEMBER 12, 2023, TO PROVIDE FOR SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FROM THE GENERAL FUND AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES AND TO PROVIDE FOR CASH TRANSFERS) be placed on its first reading.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp, Dike (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being five or more votes in favor, the motion passed, and Ordinance No. 2024-57 was placed upon its first reading. The Assistant Law Director read the Ordinance by its title only.

Mr. Lasko explained that we do this every year at closeout. This is our final appropriations sure-up for not just the General Fund, but also all additional funds in our chart of accounts. In summary, a lot of the funds have no changes or very modest increases or decreases to personnel expenses and other expenses. The net impact is a net increase to our appropriations of \$2.25 million. It sounds like a lot, but to break that down, \$1.4 million is an increase in appropriations for the Electric Fund (HPP), which is just a timing issue of when we get the bill and when we get the revenue back. Another \$500,000 is a transfer from the Water

Fund to the Water Capital Account, which we do annually. That makes up \$1.9 million of the \$2.25 million. The remaining \$325,000 is broken down as \$100,000 for the Garbage Fund (also a timing issue of when the bill arrives versus receiving revenue), funds for debt retirement (when we did the budget for 2024, they didn't know when their first payment was going to come due for the road work in Chaska and Old Homestead – that debt payment is due this December), and modest increases/decreases in General Fund line items and additional funds. This is something done every year to close out the books.

Mr. Widman added that in numerous cases it comes down to legal level of control. You might have enough money in wages, but you don't have enough in other expenses. You can't just do that yourself, we have to legislate it. The overall percentage change is 4.7%, which is not a big deal. When you take out the \$1.4 million and the \$500,000, and fire overtime, and the two transfers, at the end it is less than a 0.25% increase.

Mr. Hagy asked if the 4% is an indicator of how well the budget was put together at the beginning of the year. Mr. Widman said although he wasn't here at the beginning of the year, he thinks they did a very good job. Mr. Hagy said his thinking is that the 4% is that we had to bring the 4% over the cover until the end of the year, which seems to be an "at the margins" change. Mr. Widman said with the inflation we have been experiencing, having it being that small is great. He thinks they did a really good job, and that includes the departments in staying within their budgets.

The Mayor asked if there were further questions. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll on final adoption of Ordinance No. 2024-57. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp, Dike (5)
NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor of adoption, Ordinance No. 2024-57 was adopted. The Ordinance as adopted was signed by the Mayor and Clerk of Council and will take effect immediately.

Ordinance No. 2024-58

Motion by Mr. Tapp that the three-reading rule be waived and Ordinance No. 2024-58 (AN ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF HURON, OHIO DURING THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2025) be placed on its first reading.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus (5)
NAYS: None (0)

There being five or more votes in favor, the motion passed, and Ordinance No. 2024-58 was placed upon its first reading. The Assistant Law Director read the Ordinance by its title only.

Mr. Lasko said he doesn't have anything to add. These are the initial appropriations, which basically appropriates the budget that was passed during the Public Hearing.

Mr. Biddlecombe said he appreciates Mr. Lasko explaining the property tax increase revenue. Reading that Sandusky Register article, you would think we are getting tons of money from this windfall. The schools are going to see a significant increase, but \$10,500, if that what it ends up being, in the scheme of our budget is not very significant. Mr. Lasko said they have heard reports that people are getting letters of 30% and 40%, and that may actually end being the case and his is not minimizing it because that does impact individual pocketbooks, but even if it is 30%, for the City that is \$110,000. That's not insignificant, but when you are looking at a \$6.6 million general fund and an all-in City budget of \$53 million, \$110,000 isn't going to move the needle. Even if the percentage is drastically higher, because the City only gets 7-8% of real estate taxes, it's nominal. In other taxing jurisdictions it could be significant, but not for political jurisdictions.

The Mayor asked if there were further questions. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll on final adoption of Ordinance No. 2024-58. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Tapp, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus (5)
NAYS: None (0)

There being more than a majority in favor of adoption, Ordinance No. 2024-58 was adopted. The Ordinance as adopted was signed by the Mayor and Clerk of Council and will take effect immediately.

Motion

Motion by Mr. Tapp to appoint Tom Harris to the Board of Building and Zoning Appeals for a 5-year term; to reappoint Tom Solberg, Jr. to the Huron Joint Recreation District for a term of 2 years; to reappoint Bob Williams as a Joint Appointee to the Huron Joint Port Authority for a term of 4 years; to appoint Tom Solberg, Jr. to the Huron Joint Port Authority for a term of 4 years, and to reappoint Mark Cencer to the Planning Commission for a term of 4 years.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus (5)
NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor, the motion passed and the board and committee appointments/reappointments were approved.

Motion

Motion by Mr. Tapp to reflect on the record that the Personnel Appeals Board and Income Tax Board of Review are not currently active and, therefore, will not be populated unless or until the City Council later determines a need for the relevant board to be activated.

Mr. Lasko said there is always the debate that if you have a board or commission, the thought is that you should fill them. However, we also have boards and commissions on the books that aren't relevant for various reasons, with two being those that are the subject of this motion. They debated over removing them from the Code, or to just go on the record to say they are current irrelevant, but if they are needed, they will be populated (so you don't have to re-pass the code). In talking to SSEG (legal counsel), the

thought was to keep them on the books as we may need them in the future, but we wanted there to be a record as to why they are not being filled.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe, Claus (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor, the motion passed.

Motion

Motion by Mr. Claus to set a Public Hearing regarding the request to amend legislatively approved Turtle Bay Condo R-3 PUD for January 28, 2025 at 6:30pm, immediately preceding the regular Council meeting.

Mr. Lasko stated that there is a lot in the PUD for Turtle Bay that odd-shaped that, if subject to the setbacks in the PUD, renders it nearly unbuildable. They are looking for a modest alteration to the setback, I believe it is the rear setback. The homeowners' association approved, the neighbors are in favor of it, and the Planning Commission approved it prior to this meeting. Because it the alteration of a PUD, it must come before Council.

Mr. Dike answered why they must wait until January 28th. Mr. Lasko said that you must give at least 30 days' notice for a public hearing.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor, the motion passed, and a Public Hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, January 28th at 6:30pm, immediately preceding the regular Council meeting.

City Manager's Discussion

The City Manager spoke on several topics:

My gift to Council is that I am not going to have a Manager's Report for this evening. I do want to note that the website is live as of yesterday (ext. 1104 with any critiques). There is a lot of troubleshooting involved, so if you see any functionality issue, please let Jen Kilbury know. It looks great, but it is a work in progress. Thank you to all involved. This is our last Council meeting for the year. Merry Christmas to Council, staff, the community and I will quote Sam, who isn't here today, I do agree that we have the best staff around. Thank you to them, and to Council, you guys are great as well. Merry Christmas to all.

Mr. Biddlecombe congratulated staff on the new website, it does look great – I was scrolling through it earlier. The only real questions I have seen brought up, and it's more for Doug, there have been questions about when the ice rink will open. Obviously, we haven't had cold enough temperatures... Mr. Steinwart answered that they will setting it up the first week of January at Faben Park under the large shelter.

Mayor's Discussion

Mayor Tapp said:

I want to thank staff, Council and the public for all their support throughout the year. I want to thank the Finance Committee for all the hard work on the budget – they are not the most exciting meetings but must be done. In the next few months, we will be taking a hard look at some of the projects and what can and cannot be done. I am just a figurehead up here, everybody is equal up here and we all do the same things, so I want to thank all the Councilmembers for a good year, and hopefully another good year. Condolences to Mr. Biddlecombe on the passing of his grandmother and to Mr. Ebert on the passing of his mother-in-law. I want to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a safe holiday.

For the Good of the Order

Mark Claus – First, I would like to thank all the volunteers, Mr. Harris who is here tonight, for all the volunteers on the boards and commissions we appointed and reappointed. I have been on several of these over the past years, and it's a volunteer position for all of them and it's greatly appreciated. I want to thank the Finance Department, Mr. Widman, Mr. Lasko, Mr. Hamilton and department heads for all their hard work on the budget process this year. It was made a little more difficult without the passing the income tax measure. I want to thank everybody in that department. Also, I want thank Mr. Lasko, Mr. Hamilton and all the bargaining units for successful contract negotiations. That process is difficult, and this year's was extra challenging. Everyone has been very cooperative, and they were successful. I appreciate the bargaining units accepting the ability to reopen the negotiations every year for wages and healthcare. My condolences to the Wentz and Biddlecombe families. This is tough time of year to lose loved ones. Merry Christmas to everyone. Thanks, staff, for a great year. Happy New Year, and we will see everybody in 2025.

Joe Dike – I would also like to give my condolences to the Wentz family. I had an opportunity to introduce myself once, and she was a very unique person. I would also like to give my condolences to the Judy McCarthy family. They were neighbors in the Beachwood neighborhood and very good people, so I am very sorry for that loss, as well. The website looks great, but one recommendation, I think there should be a lot more photos because there are lot of great areas in our community and photos tell a thousand words. Secondly, I think there should be something for local business, that are located in Huron, that have a Huron address, where they can put their logo or advertisement of their address and phone number. That should be on there for free – I don't think we should have them paying for that. We, as a council and a city, should be helping to promote these businesses.

Mr. Hamilton said that as they add functionality on the website, there will be a local business directory.

Mr. Dike continued, saying Mr. Lasko says "drastic measures" and Mr. Tapp says "hard." I look at these coming years to be unique opportunities, so I think we will make it through just fine. I am looking forward to the years that come, and I want to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I look forward to the upcoming year. Thank you again, and Happy Holidays!

Joel Hagy – I also wanted to convey my condolences to the Wentz family. Mrs. Wentz, at 105, was a lifelong educator, mentor and a really great neighbor. We will miss her quite a bit. Happy Holidays to everyone going into the holiday season.

William Biddlecombe – Mr. Ebert, my condolences to your family. Thanks, staff, for your hard work. It has been a great year. I would like everyone to know that the next large item garbage day is Monday, January 6, 2025. I would like to congratulate Cam Manner, not only did he receive All-Ohio honors for soccer, but he also received it this year for football, as well. It is quite rare for a student athlete to receive All-Ohio in two sports in the same season. I would also like to congratulate the Huron Football Program for achieving All Academic Honors again this year, and that marks the 20th consecutive year they have received that.

Home games coming up:

Girls Basketball – December 21, 28 and January 4

Boys Basketball – December 21, 28 and January 10 and 11

Bowling – December 7 and 8

Please come out and support our local events, programs and student athletes. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and GO TIGERS!

Executive Session

Motion by Mr. Claus to enter into executive session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee, and to invite Mr. Lasko and Mr. Ebert.

Mr. Claus that Council will not be taking any further action following the executive session.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions 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: Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy, Biddlecombe (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being five or more votes in favor, the motion passed and Council moved into Executive Session at 7:30pm.

Return to Regular Session

Council returned to regular session at 7:42 pm.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Biddlecombe to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.

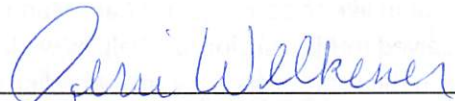
The Mayor asked if there were any questions on the motion. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll on the motion. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Biddlecombe, Claus, Tapp, Dike, Hagy (5)

NAYS: None (0)

There being a majority in favor of the motion, the regular Council meeting of December 18, 2024, was adjourned at 7:42pm.

Adopted: 28 JAN 2025


Terri S. Welkener, Clerk of Council