

WHITEHALL COUNCIL COMMITTEES

MINUTES – April 26, 2022

Council President Potter called the April 26, 2022 Council Committees' meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

The following members of council and the administration were present:

Members of the Administration

Council President Thomas Potter
Mayor Kim Maggard
City Attorney Michael Bivens
City Auditor Steve Quincel
City Administrator Zach Woodruff

Council Members

Gerald Dixon
Wes Kantor
Amy Smith
Bob Bailey
Jo Anna Heck
Karen Conison
Lori Elmore

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

THIRD READING:

ORDINANCE NO. 011-2022 (*Comm. Of the Whole – 3rd reading – ADOPT 05/03/2022-Conison/Dixon*)

AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF THE MAY 2022 REPLACEMENT PAGES TO THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL.

SECOND READING:

ORDINANCE NO. 013-2022 (*Comm. Of the Whole – 3rd reading – ADOPT 05/17/2022-Elmore/Kantor*)

AMENDING 161.11(a) AND (b) TITLED “LEGAL HOLIDAYS” OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Councilperson Bailey opened at 6:31 p.m. and said there are no drafts or pending legislation on the agenda.

Chairperson Bailey said he had something for Community Date Board. On July 10, Crooked Highway will be playing at Music in the Park. He encourages everyone to come out and see them.

Mayor Maggard said to Mr. Dixon, at the January 11 Council meeting you stated that money taken from the citizen’s wallet could be taken instead from the budget process or at least in part making that burden less. However, since that time you have failed to acknowledge that of the one point four million annual cost of the Safer Whitehall Initiative, six hundred thousand of that is already coming through the budget process. You said that the Police Department quote “What they need, they should get.” You said that. However, you do not support a plan to provide them with the very resources that they need. You also said quote “Some effort to not go back to the well” and she agrees that if it were not for covid 19, they would not be going back to the well. Again, at last week’s City Council meeting you said that the hiring of additional officers should come from the parameters of the budget. Again, you give the impression this is not currently happening. The City projects over four hundred thousand dollars revenue from property taxes. Those funds pay for a variety of budget items including salaries, uniforms and equipment for police officers and fire fighters, street laborers and even City Council salaries. To make it sound like this is something new is inaccurate. Plain inaccurate. You went on to say that if cuts were not able to be made that we simply should go without until we can. This is the type of short sightedness that will not lift up

our community or make our seniors, children and neighbors safer. As she has repeated over and over, our number one priority is the safety of this community. That is why the police budget has increased forty-six percent and the number of officers has increased by six since 2012. The single largest expense in the general fund budget is the Division of Police at approximately twenty three percent and that is why it is the number one priority. It was and will continue to be the number one priority in our budgets. We did all that while increasing street maintenance and parks systems. However, the one thing we could not foresee is the once in a century pandemic. That is covid 19 and as you are aware, you were budgeting and we were budgeting to fully fund this initiative in the budget process. In 2020, we even began the architect selection process. If not for covid, we would not be going back to the well, as you so say and as you put it. As you are aware and you have been told in meetings, the funding of the Safer Whitehall Initiative can be found in the amount of refunds we were projecting this year. From one point two million in 2019 to four million this year. We could have done this if covid 19 had not hit. So Mr. Dixon, you have had your four months to study this issue, you have had multiple meetings with myself, the City Auditor, the City Administrator and the Chief of Police. Since we are still in the Finance Committee, thank you Bob, I would like to know how you plan to cut one point four million from the budget to fund this plan, specifically what cuts would you propose. What programs would you terminate? You are the appropriating authority so you can do that. What positions would you eliminate or layoff? What services would you reduce? Here is your budget, take a look at that and I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Chairperson Bailey asked Mr. Dixon if he would like to respond.

Mr. Dixon said he thinks that he has been clear about what he felt about Issue 10. It seems to him that when anyone disagrees with the status quo here, sort of ganged up on. He feels like because he did not say yes, as most people say yes at City Hall that he is somehow a villain. He thinks he has stated himself very clearly. It is not his business to go through the budget, line by line, and tell the Mayor what it is that she should cut, only the feeling is just as he has stated both on the blog and in meetings with her.

City Administrator Woodruff said his question would be, certainly Mr. Dixon, you have looked through the budget at this point and no one is trying to gang up on you other than when you say (too many talking at once.) You had said we could find it in the budget, where would you proposed the cuts come from. I think if you are going to propose that residents do not support the levy and you say we can find it in the budget, I think there is a responsibility to tell people what those cuts would be. They could hire twenty more police officers tomorrow but we would just have to eliminate the Fire Department. I think residents would want to know what cuts you propose because when you say ganging up, the rest of your colleagues support this plan and understand that there is not one point four million dollars. They have gone through the budget the same way you have because you have had a copy of the budget since they proposed it in November. I would just want to know what cuts you propose to make.

Chairperson Dixon said he has stated an overview on how he feels on the matter with Mr. Woodruff and the Mayor and (coughing.) Now they know how he feels it is up to them. He has talked about properties ownership that Whitehall has taken on. He talked about parks and rec, the benefits, the salaries that do not exactly stay in line with what the average Whitehall citizen makes.

Mr. Woodruff said he wants to make sure he understand. You are proposing that we would reduce salaries to be consistent with the average resident. Is that accurate?

There was further conversation about responsibility and that Mr. Dixon is going to have to legislate and appropriate by more than feelings.

Chairperson Bailey said to President Potter that he was going to take control of his committee and stop this discussion at this point so everyone can reflect on it from here. However, he neglected to complete a thought in poll council last week and that was the crux of what he was saying about looking down the road ten or fifteen years is that we also might have to consider if the government installation north of them changes and they lose that percentage of the budget. If you do not know how much that is, you need to know because in your thinking, that has to be in the back of your mind. They were faced with losing

the tax base out of there not too long ago. The thing is if that tax base goes away, maybe police, fire and services go away. It is a large portion of their budget. All the things that are important to this community could just disappear. Sitting here now, they need to be thinking far ahead about the what if's. That what if is big. That was part of his consideration.

Chairperson Dixon said he understand and appreciates all those things. He happens to disagree and there are reasons he has stated why he disagrees. He has not gone through the budget and picked out every penny and one hundred dollar bill from it. He gave an overview of it. This is where he stands and this is how he feels.

Chairperson Bailey said this discussion is over Mr. President, hearing nothing further, Councilperson Bailey closed at 6:44 p.m.

COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND ENFORCEMENT

Chairperson Smith opened at 6:45 p.m. and said there are no drafts or pending legislation on the agenda.

ORDINANCE NO. 017-2022 DRAFT # 1

AMENDING, APPENDIX – TRAFFIC SCHEDULE IV, OF THE TRAFFIC CODE, OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO, ENTITLED “PARKING PROHIBITED ALL TIMES” AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

City Administrator Woodruff said that all of Council is aware the installation of the traffic calming islands on Maplewood is almost complete. They have erected the no parking signs but if someone were to park there, there is no enforcement currently under the code to allow the safety forces to remedy the issue. The second part in talking to his team about the Maplewood issue, this issue on Wright Avenue came up. They believe there was an error, as they can see it talks about going west on Wright across Yearling. Wright does not go that way so it puts it on the east as intended and this will prohibit the parking so close to the stop sign and the intersection that has been an issue from time to time.

Chairperson Bailey asked if there was a map, they could look at and Mr. Woodruff replied that he would make sure they had a copy tomorrow.

Chairperson Bailey asked if this has to go on first reading and Mr. Woodruff replied that they have already installed these medians so being able to provide for the enforcement of no parking so they do not create potential safety hazards.

(Comm. Stand & Enf – 1st reading – ADOPT 05/03/2022–Smith/Conison)

Having nothing further, Chairperson Smith closed at 6:48 p.m.

COMMUNITY AND ELDER ADVOCACY

Chairperson Dixon opened at 6:48 p.m. and said there are no drafts or pending legislation on the agenda.

Chairperson Dixon said he went last week to the April senior center birthday. He believes the program that will be happening every month. He met many fellow seniors.

Chairperson Dixon wanted to poll council to see what their thoughts were on getting rid of property taxes for people sixty-five and older. He put a meme on Facebook and he thought it was a good idea. Sadly, seniors have a limited income and congress is always threatening to take away benefits or they do not have enough money for it. He does not know if this has ever had traction under it or enough to bring it to discussion. In his mind, and this is the beginning of the conversation and he does not know where it will go or what power they have as a governing body to influence people. He would like to get a letter with

their signatures on it down to the Statehouse or Michael Stinziano to see what happens. What are the thoughts on this?

Chairperson Bailey asked what the Homestead Act was.

Auditor Quincel replied it is a reduction on the property tax bill.

Chairperson Kantor asked about the citizen who does not have kids who go to Whitehall City Schools, should they have to pay the school tax.

Auditor Quincel replied that seventy five percent of your property tax goes to the school district.

Mayor Maggard said the city receives fourteen dollars for every one thousand dollars in property taxes paid. That is something that would need to be discussed with the district.

It was decided that Mr. Dixon would bring to Council some numbers, examples, some demographics and data that they can look at and make an informed decision. He will get back to them.

Chairperson Bailey gave an update on the resolution to the issue the woman who came to Council last week had.

Having no further business, Chairperson Dixon closed at 6:56 p.m.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chairperson Kantor opened at 6:57 p.m. and said there are no drafts or pending legislation on the agenda.

Chairperson Kantor said that Jays Automotive, one of the oldest businesses in Whitehall has been sold.

Having nothing further, Chairperson Kantor closed at 6:59 p.m.

INFRASTRUCTURE, MAINTENANCE AND SERVICE

Chairperson Conison opened at 6:59 p.m. and said there are no drafts or pending legislation on the agenda.

There was no discussion in Infrastructure, Maintenance and Services.

Having nothing further, Chairperson Conison closed at 6:59 p.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Chairperson Elmore opened at 6:59 p.m. and said there are no drafts or pending legislation on the agenda.

Chairperson Elmore said the Safer Whitehall Town Hall was very informative and it was a way for the residents to have the opportunity to learn about Issue 10. Because it is National Telecommunications Week, she thanked all the Whitehall dispatchers by name. She thanked the first responders for their help in cleaning up the community. She reminded everyone that May 3 is the primary election and to vote yes on Issue 10.

City Administrator gave an update on the fires at Woodcliff Condominiums and the funding needed to start demolition.

Having nothing further, Chairperson Elmore closed at 7:02 p.m.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Chairperson Heck opened at 7:02 p.m. and said there are no drafts or pending legislation on the agenda.

Chairperson Heck said opening day for baseball, softball and t-ball is this Saturday at 10:00 am and soccer is going on at John Bishop Park around the same time. The cleanup went very well last weekend. Sign-ups for Day Camp have begun and pickle ball lessons will be held at the YMCA this Monday from 9:00 to 11:00 am.

Having nothing further, Chairperson Heck closed at 7:04 p.m.

President Potter thanked Mr. Bailey for filling in for him during his absence. It was very much appreciated.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie A. Ogg, Clerk of Council