

4143

APRIL 15, 2024 – REGULAR MEETING

Tiffin City Council met for its second meeting of the month in accordance with Codified Ordinance Section 121.03. Council President Pro Tem Cheyane Thacker opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. The invocation was given, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL: Clerk of Council Ann Forrest recited roll call and six councilmembers were present: Aaron Jones (1st Ward), Scott Hoernemann (2nd Ward), Kevin Roessner (3rd Ward), Dennis Snay (4th Ward), Cheyane Thacker (At Large), and John Hays (At Large); John Kahler (At Large). Also attending were Mayor Lee Wilkinson, Director of Law Zachary Fowler, City Administrator Nick Dutro, Director of Finance Kathy Kaufman, Director of Communications and Constituent Services Liz Croak and Public Works Superintendent Brandon Burner.

PETITION: Petition No. 2024-01 by Urban Schalk, 73 Frost Parkway, to vacate an alley in the Second Ward of the City of Tiffin, Ohio, being a 16.5 foot wide alley running east/west between Lots #517-519 on the north and Lots #533-534 on the south, all in Heming's Resurvey. *Referred to Streets, Sidewalks and Sewers Committee.*

MINUTES: The minutes of the April 1, 2024 Regular and Committee of the Whole Meetings were approved as written.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

In the absence of Councilmember Kahler, Councilmember Hays reported that the Law & Community Planning Committee met in City Chambers on April 9, 2024 starting at 5:15 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Mayor's Request for Legislation #24-18 (CDBG 2024 Application) and any other business to come before the committee. Attending were committee members John Kahler, John Hays, and Dennis Snay. Also attending were Law Director Zachary Fowler, City Administrator Nick Dutro, Council Member Scott Hoernemann and Adam Gillmor, Development Manager at Tiffin-Seneca Economic Partnership. Council Member Kahler started the meeting by opening discussions regarding Mayor's Request for Legislation #24-18. City Administrator Nick Dutro advised the committee that the Community Development Block Grant, provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and funneled through the Ohio Department of Development, has awarded money to the City of Tiffin for many years on a biennial basis. The grant is to be used for some sort of community project. The project must meet certain community guidelines and must serve a public good. In the past the grant has been used for a variety of projects including park improvements and the Community Kitchen program. The intent of the 2024 CDBG is for improvements to Apple-Jack Park. Other parks in Tiffin have been improved through the grant in the past. Improving Apple-Jack Park has ranked very high on local public interest polls. The grant is expected to net about \$120,000.00 after administrative costs for improvements to the park. The grant could also pay for a consultant that the City has targeted to help with the park design. City Administrator Dutro introduced Parks Director Bryce Kuhn from Tiffin Parks & Recreation. Mr. Kuhn explained that the project at Apple-Jack Park may involve installing an asphalt trail around the park and updating the playground equipment. City Administrator Dutro introduced Adam Gillmor from TSEP. Mr. Gillmor explained that TSEP handles the application of the CDBG. The deadline to apply for the grant is June 12. TSEP polls have shown that the Apple-Jack Park improvement project is one of highest ranked local projects. Council Member John Hays moved to recommend that the Law Director draft legislation authorizing the city to apply for the 2024 CDBG. Council Member Dennis Snay seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 3-0. With no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m. Report respectfully submitted by John Kahler, Chair.

No additional Committee of the Whole was scheduled.

REPORTS OF THE OFFICERS:

MAYOR LEE WILKINSON:

Mayor Wilkinson reported the following:

- Last Monday was the Total Solar Eclipse, and everything went as planned. We had just the right number of people in town, the mass wedding took place, businesses and the downtown area were busy, and a good time was had by all.
- Sunday, April 14th was the scavenger hunt hosted by Calvert senior Trenton Staub. His senior project was to bring awareness to gun violence and to enhance the safety of Calvert Schools, for which he raised \$1,200.
- The Tiffin Columbian Academic Breakfast is Wednesday at Carmie's.

- Members of the Shade Tree Commission will travel Wednesday to Defiance to accept the Tree City USA Award for Tiffin.
- The Third Thursday Artist Stroll this week will include the participation of over 20 businesses and artists.
- Thursday is also the Tiffin Honor Baseball Game which starts with a parade at Lot 6 at 4 p.m. and down to the baseball diamonds on Charlotte St. Proceeds to the Salvation Army, Fish Food Pantry and the Tiffin Community Non-Food Pantry.
- Saturday, April 20th is the Oakley Park Cleanup.

Mayor Wilkinson introduced Megan Hunyor from Columbia Gas of Ohio, who gave reported on the Fourth and Washington Projects to be completed in two different phases. Phase I got started a few weeks ago and will finish in a few months. They will replace old steel and cast iron pipe with new plastic pipe, which is cost effective, has a longer life span and has enhanced safety benefits because it expands and contracts with the earth. Phase I covers 115 customers with 9,000 ft. of pipe. This phase is going smoothly; the 5th section has been gassed up already and the 6th and 7th should be done next week. Service lines will then be done by appointment only with a brief service interruption of a couple hours. Crews will knock on doors, place door tags and make phone calls to make residents aware. Phase II (Washington St.) will start this year in two-three months. Conditions will be temporary to maintain safety and accessibility, but as the project nears completion they will come back to do the restoration.

The Mayor introduced TSEP Downtown Manager Donna Gross and Bryan Perrine for their update on last Saturday's downtown cleanup. Gross explained that one of the four points of our Main Street Program is the Design Committee, which is responsible for making our downtown look beautiful. One component of that is downtown cleanups that we have been doing since 2018. Last year one of their members, Dustin Richie, came up with a competitive portion to the cleanup. Perrine explained that downtown business owner Mark "Bunky" Roehrig always picked up trash when he walked to work. In 2018 Rock for Life decided to do as a fundraiser to help him with his cancer. One of the events for this was a cleanup with about 100 volunteers, and Mark served as the inspiration for future cleanups. In 2023 Richie came up with the idea of having a "Litter League", a competition based off of a sporting event with teams picking up trash and weighing trash for a prize. This year they have three sponsors and a lot of people coming to help. Last year they were 164 volunteers with almost 1,000 lbs. of trash picked up. For the first cleanup last Saturday, 75 people came and collected 267 lbs. of trash. Perrine said that the support has been overwhelming. Gross added that this year the Community Kitchen volunteered to provide lunch for them, and a group of Girl Scouts and Tiffin University's ladies lacrosse team assisted. President Pro Tem Thacker thanked them for putting this wonderful program together because our downtown looks so beautiful.

Mayor Wilkinson introduced Public Works Superintendent Brandon Burner for his annual department report. He first honored Brenda Young for her retirement after 32 years of exemplary service to the City and expressed his heartfelt gratitude for her support. Mayor Wilkinson read a proclamation honoring and celebrating her over three decades of dedicated service. Burner followed with the 2023 Community Forest Report, noting that the Shade Tree Commission and the Mayor were going Wednesday to receive our 43rd Year Award plus our 6th Growth Award. This also marks the first year for Heidelberg University; member Dr. Ken Baker worked diligently with Heidelberg to establish them as a Tree Campus USA. The late Dr. Percy Lilly, one of the founders of our tree program, was able to be there for the 2023 Arbor Day celebration at the university, and Heidelberg posthumously dedicated their campus forest in his honor. He attended the Tree Academy along with Shade Tree Commission members and the arborists. They are in the process of completing the scientifically-based Master Planting Design Plan where they choose the right tree for the right place and plant it at the right time. One of the ways to do this is through an Urban Site Index Inventory, taking a number of environmental factors and then choosing the proper species for diversification and management. They now send letters to neighbors of our public trees asking if they would actively oppose a tree because they don't want to put it where it won't be cherished and nurtured. Public Works does their own site preparation and tree planting since last year. A number of grants have been received, in large part due to the efforts of Shade Tree Commission Chairman, Michael Pinkston. Pinkston said trees are City assets, and it is our responsibility to manage and care for them appropriately. With nine people having graduated from the Tree Commission Academy, the plan they are working now is a result of all the best practices they learned to make sure the trees like the environment they are in and that the community understands their value for modern living. He thanked the Tree Commission volunteers for all their work managing the flower pots, hanging baskets and flower beds and watering them for 26 weeks, seven days a week, 3 hours every night under the organization of Christy Wisser. It was also Wisser's idea to improve the Christmas lights downtown this past winter. Burner added that they would be planting a tree from ODNR at Stalter Park on Arbor Day, with another Arbor

4145

Day planting during Heritage Festival School Days. On the Public Works Department side, Burner stated that their mission is to proactively maintain the City’s infrastructure to improve living conditions for residents and visitors. A staff of 15 plus one part-time employee covers the City’s streets, sewers, trees and electrical work. He presented statistics on job orders and types of work done and said they had taken on sink hole and asphalt repairs during better weather; any asphalt repairs they can do in house saves money, which he estimated at \$32,000 last year. They are also seeing benefits of crack sealing with the Road & Bridge Levy long-term maintenance program. 2023 highlights were: three new pieces of equipment; facility improvements; street sweeping, the alley drag/grade program; S. Sandusky St. drainage improvements. W. Market St. Bridge deck repairs and 41 tree plantings by Public Works arborists. In 1Q2024 they did a curb/gutter debris sweep and this summer will repair /replace dozens of basins flagged during cleaning. 2023 sewer highlights included force Main downstream MH lining, brick sewer lining, Omni Fiber repairs, sewer easement vegetation clearing, Hayes-Albion sewer abandonment, sewer CCTV truck rebuild (over \$200,000 savings), 4th Ave. sewer repairs and Riverview sewer investment. The LTCP Backflow Prevention Project and CSO 17 Final Separation was done with over \$1.5 million in savings. He closed by thanking the many departments, organizations and people, including his family, who have provided valuable support. Councilmember Thacker and Mayor Wilkinson thanked Burner and his crew for all their hard work and for finding funding and ways to save money that in the end goes back into our citizens’ pockets. City Administrator Dutro echoed Thacker’s comment about their being unsung heroes doing so much for the community and stated that Burner’s and Watson’s crews constantly try to bring more processes in-house to save taxpayer dollars. He added that they were able to leverage a NOPEC grant for about half of the cost of the Public Works facility project.

CLERK OF COUNCIL ANN FORREST: No report.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE KATHY KAUFMANN:

Finance Director Kaufman gave further details on ordinances up for their third reading: Ord. 2024-24 is for a little extra money for the Market St. Safety Study; Ord. 2024-25 is for increased TIF II revenue sharing due to increased income; and Ord. 2024-27 is to put money in the Police Budget from a scrap metal sale. Suspension is requested for Ord. 2024-33 for the bond payment discussed in the Committee of the Whole. We have to determine which fund is actually going to pay for it and transfer the money there because it is not self-funded. We passed that in a previous meeting but left out Council’s approving the transfer. Suspension is also requested for Ord. 2024-35 to add funds to the Council Clerk Budget because the county’s bill was received for election expenses for the first half of the year, and it was higher than expected.

Director of Finance Report for the month ending:	MARCH 31, 2024
Total Receipts for the month:	\$5,117,925.48
Total Expenses for the month:	\$5,101,005.00
The General Fund unencumbered balance:	\$4,510,135.70

The income tax receipts for March 2024 were \$988,167.79. The total annual increase in income tax receipts in March 2024 compared to March 2023 is \$33,281.64. Year to date income tax receipts are up 3.94%.

The .25% portion of income tax receipts that was transferred into fund 215 for public streets for March 2024 is \$120,516.92.

The unexpended balance for all funds is **\$38,131,668.97** which is the same as the bank balances for the same time period.

Councilmember Roessner moved to accept the March 31, 2024 financial report as presented, as well as the bank reconciliation emailed to Council; Councilmember Snay seconded. On a voice vote motion was approved 6-0.

DIRECTOR OF LAW ZACHARY FOWLER:

Law Director Fowler reminded Council that their financial disclosures are due May 15. He also said he has not yet picked a public records training date that he will attend and asked members to let him know if anyone wanted him to be their designee since legislation may be needed. Last Friday he attended civil law training, and one presentation was on clean energy tax incentives on solar panels, city structures, energy efficient vehicles, etc. that he has shared with City officials. Another presentation was about the extent of home rule; through the Ohio

4146

Constitution we pass ordinances albeit with some limitations. Columbus had passed a law banning flavored tobacco, and Ohio passed a state law placing some limitations. Columbus is challenging it, so the Ohio Supreme Court will clarify what city councils can do, but it will be a couple of years until the issue is resolved.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

Finance Director's Request for Legislation #F24-22 to amend the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate funds into Council Clerk Budget. (\$10,000.00).

On file in Clerk of Council's Office; legislation prepared under Ord. 2024-35.

Finance Director's Request for Legislation #F24-23 to amend the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate funds into the Police and Parks Budgets. (\$8,646.00 + \$663.00)

On file in Clerk of Council's Office; legislation prepared under Ord 2024-36.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

MOTIONS: None.

RESOLUTIONS:

ORDINANCES:

Ordinance 2024-24, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the third time.

AN ORDINANCE amending the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate \$5,550.00 into the State Highway Improvement Fund Budget.

Councilmember Roessner moved for passage; Councilmember Hoernemann seconded.

Discussion: Councilmember Hoernemann that this ordinance is for the West Market St Safety Study.

Roll call votes were taken on the passage, and it was approved 6-0.

Ordinance 2024-25, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the third time.

AN ORDINANCE amending the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate \$5,000.00 into the TIF II S. Shaffer Park Dr. Fund Budget.

Councilmember Roessner moved for passage; Councilmember Hayes seconded.

Roll call votes were taken, and it was approved 6-0.

Ordinance 2024-27, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the third time.

AN ORDINANCE amending the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate \$500.00 into the Police Budget.

Councilmember Roessner moved for passage; Councilmember Jones seconded.

Discussion: Councilmember Hoernemann explained that the funds are from a scrap metal reimbursement and will be used for police vehicle maintenance.

Roll call votes were taken, and it was approved 6-0.

Ordinance 2024-31, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the second time.

AN ORDINANCE amending the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate \$650.00 into the Park Budget.

Ordinance 2024-32, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the second time.

AN ORDINANCE amending the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate \$100,000.00 into the Sewer Fund Budget.

Ordinance 2024-33, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE authorizing the transfer of \$146,000.00 from the Capital Improvements Fund to the 2022 Street Improvement Bonds Fund, payment of the bond, and declaring an emergency.

Councilmember Roessner moved for suspension of the three-reading rule and passage; Councilmember Hoernemann seconded.

Roll call votes were taken on the suspension, emergency and passage, and each was approved 6-0.

4147

Ordinance 2024-34, introduced by John Hays and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE authorizing the Mayor and/or Tiffin-Seneca Economic Partnership to apply to and receive from the Ohio Department of Development, Office of Community Development for a Small Cities Community Development Block Grant for qualifying projects and allowable administrative expenses, authorizing bidding and executing of contracts as needed, and declaring an emergency.

Ordinance 2024-35, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE amending the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate \$10,000.00 into the Council Clerk Budget.

Councilmember Roessner moved for suspension of the three-reading rule and passage; Councilmember Jones seconded.

Roll call votes were taken on the suspension and passage, and both were approved 6-0.

Ordinance 2024-36, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE amending the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate \$8,648.00 into the Police Budget and \$663.00 into the Park Budget.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Councilmember Thacker announced a Streets, Sidewalks and Sewers Committee meeting Monday, April 22, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. at 73 Frost Parkway to discuss Alley Vacation Petition 2024-01, and any other business that may come before them.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Ann Forrest, Clerk of Council.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2024

Presiding Officer of Council

Attest: _____
Clerk of Council