

**APRIL 1, 2024 – REGULAR MEETING**

Tiffin City Council met for its first meeting of the month in accordance with Codified Ordinance Section 121.03. Council President Boyle 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 seven councilmembers were present: Aaron Jones (1<sup>st</sup> Ward), Scott Hoernemann (2<sup>nd</sup> Ward), Kevin Roessner (3<sup>rd</sup> Ward), Dennis Snay (4<sup>th</sup> Ward), Cheyane Thacker (At Large), and John Hays (At Large) and 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, Fire Chief Rob Chappell and City Engineer Matt Watson.

**MINUTES:** The minutes of the March 18, 2024 Regular and Committee of the Whole Meetings were approved as written.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Councilmember Kahler reported that the Law & Community Planning Committee met in City Chambers on March 25, 2024 starting at 5:15 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Mayor's Request for Legislation #24-15 (for Council to approve the Community Housing Impact & Preservation (CHIP) Partnership Agreement for Program Year 2024); Mayor's Request for Legislation #24-16 (for Council to accept the recommendation of the Tax Incentive Review Council to continue certain tax incentive agreements with local businesses and property owners); and Mayor's Request for Legislation #24-17 (for Council to authorize the City Administrator to sign a contract with Medicourt Management, Inc. to provide billing services for emergency medical services (EMS)) and any other business to come before the committee. Attending were committee members John Kahler, John Hays, and Dennis Snay. Also attending were Mayor Lee Wilkinson, Law Director Zachary Fowler, City Administrator Nick Dutro, and councilmembers Cheyane Thacker and Scott Hoernemann. Councilmember Kahler started the meeting by opening discussions regarding Mayor's Request for Legislation #24-17. City Administrator Nick Dutro introduced Tiffin Fire Chief Robert Chappell, who spoke on the matter. Chief Chappell explained that the billing agent previously used by Tiffin EMS, Change Healthcare, will no longer be servicing Tiffin. Therefore, Tiffin must find a new billing agent. Chief Chappell researched several billing agents and recommends that Tiffin EMS enter into a contract with Medicourt Management, Inc. Chief Chappell also requested that City Council suspend the three-reading rule and declare an emergency so that Medicourt may begin their onboarding process prior to Change Healthcare's contract terminating. City Administrator Dutro added that it is cost effective for the City of Tiffin to use a billing agent rather than hire full time staff to do in-house billing. Councilmember John Hays moved to recommend that the Law Director draft legislation authorizing the City Administrator to sign a contract with Medicourt Management, Inc. for the administration of the emergency medical services billing for the City's ambulance service and declaring an emergency. Councilmember Dennis Snay seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 3-0. Councilmember Kahler then addressed Mayor's Request for Legislation #24-16. City Administrator Nick Dutro explained that the Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) annually discusses incentives for Tiffin businesses and then makes a recommendation to City Council. These businesses are economic movers in the City. Mr. Dutro then introduced TSEP President and CEO Aaron Montz. Mr. Montz explained that TIRC must review certain tax incentives one time every year. TIRC recommends continuing all of the current tax incentives. Mr. Montz pointed out that Webster Industries is not currently in compliance with their incentive conditions, however, Tiffin still receives more in income tax revenue from Webster's employment than it loses with the tax incentive, that Webster only has one more year left on its tax incentive, and Webster is trying to hire more people but it is difficult for them to find help. Therefore, TIRC recommended continuing Webster's tax incentive anyway. City Administrator Nick Dutro added that Tiffin receives far more in income tax revenue than it does in property tax revenue. Councilmember John Hays moved to recommend that the Law Director draft legislation accepting the recommendation of the Tax Incentive Review Council to continue certain tax incentive agreements with local businesses and property owners and declaring an emergency. Councilmember Dennis Snay seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 3-0. Councilmember Kahler then addressed Mayor's Request for Legislation #24-15. City Administrator Nick Dutro explained that the Community Housing Impact Program (CHIP) provides financial assistance to local governments for the purpose of addressing local housing needs. Seneca County, the City of Tiffin, and the City of Fostoria are combined for purposes of receiving the local CHIP grant with the City of Tiffin receiving approximately \$350,000. The proceeds assist Tiffin residence in fixing their homes and other property issues. The program is administered by the Great Lakes Community Partnership and the Fostoria Economic Development Corporation. Councilmember Dennis Hays moved to recommend that the Law Director

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draft legislation approving a CHIP Partnership Agreement with the City of Fostoria and Seneca County, authorizing the Mayor to sign the agreement and declaring an emergency. Councilmember John Hays seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 3-0. With no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:55 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 that the March 31 community cleanup was canceled due to rain. We will still have the downtown cleanup on April 13, meeting at Cherry Alley.

Next week's Total Eclipse will begin with the partial eclipse around 2 p.m. and the total eclipse at 3:11 p.m. It will last about 4 minutes, with the partial ending about 4:30 p.m. There are many unknowns: the weather, the number of people that will come to town and when they will arrive and depart. He added that they won't be familiar with our streets, and asked that we be kind, watch out for each other and be safe. The City building will be closed, but extra police officers and firefighters will be on duty to ensure public safety and to maintain the traffic flow. Bicycle patrols will be out, and foot patrols will be in the downtown area. There will be police foot and bike patrols in the downtown area. The Tiffin Police Department will have their drone team working with the team from Tiffin University's Drone Academy, as well as City Engineer and Public Works, to coordinate with emergency services and identify any traffic problems. Emergency calls should go to 911 and non-emergency calls to 419-447-2323. The police will set up traffic control at US 224 and Shaffer Park by the hospital and Sixes Corners. He explained that there would be limited parking on West Market and Perry Streets, with signs going up this week. Hedges-Boyer Park is not open to camping but will be a great place for viewing because the downtown lights will go on during totality. Special protective glasses are available at the Chamber or local businesses for viewing. He encouraged everyone to enjoy and be safe!

The Mayor introduced Bryce Riggs and Marisa Stephens from the Seneca Regional Chamber of Commerce their update on the Total Eclipse. Riggs said that the new community guides had just been received and will be out. The Eclipse weekend will be kicked off with the county Solar Eclipse Bingo, the Out of the Dark Glow 5K Run on Saturday, and Wally and the Beavs on Sunday at the East Green. Hotels are sold out in Tiffin, with a few rooms left in Fostoria. There are 150 couples signed up for Elope at the Eclipse at the East Green on Monday during totality. He thanked the City of Tiffin for its \$10,000 donation that helped kick-start our events. A representative of the Governor's office told him that of all the Ohio counties she covers, Tiffin and Seneca County had the most going on. Stephens explained that she wanted to make sure businesses and residents were taken care of, and she sent out a business best practices and tool kit to help welcome visitors. Riggs noted that The Blade ran a full article on us, and other major networks have covered us as well. He added that their office phone would be forwarded to their cell phones so they will always be available to assist visitors.

The Mayor then introduced City Engineer Matt Watson for his annual update to Council. He noted that that this was his 11<sup>th</sup> year in Tiffin's Engineering Department and his 6<sup>th</sup> as City Engineer. His staff includes Assistant City Engineer Jason Morter, Engineer Tech I Ryan Steinmetz, and Zoning Inspector Dan Brickner. He said that they are a great team that works well together, and they accomplish a lot with a small staff. Watson highlighted the program implementation and management they have been doing: Long Term Control Plan, Transportation Planning including Traffic Signal Warrant Studies and Safety Studies, ADA Transition Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Street Paving Program, Survey Monument Preservation Program, Culvert Inspection Program, Bridge Inspection Program, and the Storm Water Management Program. He noted that under the Storm Water Management Program they do annual inspections for 11 public and 32 private facilities, and in 2023 they did 289 monthly, weekly and rain event construction site inspections, up from 135 in 2022. Also, flood plain, sewer tap and storm water permits require on-site inspections. Their office serves as Secretary for the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Architectural Board of Review and the Planning Commission. All Façade Enhancement "Certificates of Appropriateness" from the Architectural Board of Review require on-site inspections from the Zoning Inspector. Watson outlined the various 2023 grant and loan applications that they had done for the various projects, for a total of \$11,676,686 dollars, and he mentioned the 14 potential projects that grants are being applied for. He pointed out that since 2018 the City Engineer's Office has brought in nearly \$14.2 million in local, state and federal grant funds for infrastructure projects. Major projects completed in 2023 were the Ella St. River Bridge Project, East Perry St. Reconstruction, 2023 Urban Paving Project on S. Washington and W. Market Sts.,

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2023 OPWC Pavement Repair Program, and the South River Rd. Trail Overlook, all of which received major Ohio funding and local grant support. Construction projects for 2024 are Tiffin's annual street paving project, the CSO 24 & 30 Inflow Reduction Project, HSTS Elimination Project and the R 18 Resurfacing Project. The department provides additional support to private utilities Columbia Gas, Aqua and Omni Fiber, as well as to the sewer relocation and Walker St. extension for the new Heidelberg University Fieldhouse. They are also responsible for the internal inspection of 16 culverts; the one on S. Sandusky St. at Ella and Cottage Ave. cross streets will be the next for repair. We are responsible for 13 bridge decks or full replacements; they are inspected annually by ODOT free of charge; with the Ella St. bridge replacement we are now in a good position with our bridges. Watson said his five-year office goals in 2023 were to develop staff to promote sustainability while also providing a high level of service; successfully implement Phase 1 of the City's Ohio EPA-mandated LTCP; continue to effectively manage the City's Road & Bridge Levy, and focus on the long-term planning of various design and construction projects over the next five years. He added that he wants to start looking at more than five years out at more transformational projects and infrastructures to support them, especially the West Market Street traffic safety/flow issues which would allow us to continue to grow and bring in economic development. Conceptually he is also looking at other pieces such as S. Monroe and Jefferson Streets, as there is an opportunity to do road "diets" and fit the one-way roads to their use. City Engineer Watson closed by saying that he appreciated the opportunity and support received from City Council. The department has continued to raise the bar and has been quite successful, but there is a lot more that can be done. Councilmember Snay stated that we are very blessed to have him as city engineer. President Boyle thanked him for the information and for all they do. Mayor Wilkinson also thanked him and the entire Engineering Department and said we are very fortunate to have them.

**CLERK OF COUNCIL ANN FORREST:** No report.

### **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE KATHY KAUFMANN:**

Regarding Ord. 2024-22 for the OPWC Loan that was up for its third reading, Finance Director Kaufman explained that we had had another ordinance where we were appropriating funds and transferring them over. Now that everything is in the correct fund from where the payment will be made, we are now appropriating it into the appropriate account line so that she can make the payment.

**DIRECTOR OF LAW ZACHARY FOWLER:** No report.

### **WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mayor's Request for Legislation #24-18 – CDBG 2024 Application

*Referred to the Law & Community Planning Committee*

Finance Director's Request for Legislation #F24-20 to amend the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate Funds into the Park Budget. (\$650.00)

*On file in Clerk of Council's office; prepared under Ord. 2024-31.*

Finance Director's Request for Legislation #F24-21 to amend the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate funds into the Sewer Fund Budget. (\$100,000.00)

*On file in Clerk of Council's office; prepared under Ord. 2024-32.*

Tiffin-Fostoria Municipal Court 2023 Annual Report

*On file in Clerk of Council's office.*

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**MOTIONS:** None.

### **RESOLUTIONS:**

**Resolution 2024-28**, introduced by John Kahler and read for the first time.

A RESOLUTION accepting the recommendation of the Tax Incentive Review Council to continue certain tax incentive agreements with local businesses and property owners and declaring an emergency.

Councilmember Kahler 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 7-0.

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**ORDINANCES:**

**Ordinance 2024-22**, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the third time.

AN ORDINANCE amending the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate \$18,750.00 into the OPWC Loan Street Paving Budget.

Councilmember Roessner moved for passage; Councilmember Snay seconded.

Roll call vote was taken on the passage, and it was approved 7-0.

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

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

**Ordinance 2024-25**, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the second 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.

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

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

**Ordinance 2024-28**, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the second time.

AN ORDINANCE amending the 2024 Budget Ordinance 23-94 to appropriate \$146,000.00 into the Capital Improvement Budget and reduce funds by \$146,000.00 in the .25% Income Tax Public Streets Fund.

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

Roll call votes were taken on the suspension and passage, and both were approved 7-0.

**Ordinance 2024-29**, introduced by John Kahler and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE approving a CHIP Partnership Agreement with the City of Fostoria and Seneca County, authorizing the Mayor to sign the Agreement, and declaring an emergency.

Councilmember Kahler moved for suspension of the three-reading rule and passage; Councilmember Hays seconded.

Roll call votes were taken on the suspension, emergency and passage, and each was approved 7-0.

**Ordinance 2024-30**, introduced by John Kahler and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE authorizing the City Administrator to sign a contract with a private firm for the administration of the emergency medical services billing for the City's ambulance service and declaring an emergency.

Councilmember Kahler moved for suspension of the three-reading rule and passage; Councilmember Thacker seconded.

Roll call votes were taken on the suspension, emergency and passage, and each was approved 7-0.

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

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

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Further to a question received from the media, City Administrator Dutro explained that the City has two Level 3 DC fast-charging units in City Lot 7 that are owned and maintained by the City of Tiffin. We purchased and installed them through a \$150,000 grant from AEP in 2020 and an \$8,000 White Family grant through the Tiffin Community Foundation that paid for some other amenities. The City did not charge for the first year, but we now charge 12 cents per minute for the first 15 minutes and then 20 cents after that. This first quarter of 2024 we made \$737.75, and \$3,838.53 in 2023. He said we don't make a lot of money on it, but it is great to offer this service. The private sector has started to offer the service as well.

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Councilmember Kahler announced a Law & Community Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 in Council Chambers 5:30 p.m. to discuss Mayor's Request for Legislation #24-18 regarding the CDBG 2024 Application, and any other business that may come before them.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Ann Forrest, Clerk of Council.

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Officer of Council

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Council