

**MINUTES**  
**CITY & SAFETY SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**JANUARY 11, 2021**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Sarah Grace, Chair  
Chris Fahl, Vice-Chair  
Beth Clodfelter, Member

Administrators and  
Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely  
Mayor Patterson

**ITEMS DISCUSSED:**

- Water Softening Salt (WTP)
  - Grace – this is an annual expenditure for our Water Treatment Plant – recent improvements to our WTP have cut down on the amount of salt needed – in 2016, 2017 and 2018 the budget was \$200,000 and this year the projected cost is only \$155,000
  - Clodfelter – asked if there could be even more savings realized if this contract was bid at a different time of year
  - Grace – demand for WTP softening salt is consistent year round and suspects that the cost would be as well
  - Mayor – that is correct – this salt is used for daily operations as opposed to winter street salt

**ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:**

1. Softening Salt

# MINUTES

## JANUARY 11, 2021

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

#### 7:00 P.M.

Council Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Beth Clodfelter  
Sam Crowl  
Chris Fahl  
Peter Kotses  
Sarah Grace  
Jeff Risner  
Arian Smedley

Administrators and/or

Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely  
Mayor Patterson  
Planner Logue

#### Items Discussed:

- Buckeye Hills Regional Council
  - President – the Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC) serves as the City's Local Development District (LDD) for the Appalachian Regional Commission and has requested a Resolution of support as Governor DeWine begins review of State biennial budgets – they provide an incredible amount of program support to our community, and all throughout the Appalachian region
- The Ridges (building repairs and plans)
  - President – she and City Planner Logue serve on The Ridges Advisory Committee along with Pam Callahan, former Ohio University Planner and Member of the Athens City Historic Preservation Commission; Lenny Eliason, President of the Athens County Commissioners; Tom O'Grady, Southeast Ohio History Center; and Deb Shaffer, Ohio University President of Finance and Administration – on November 30 the Committee met and was informed of conditions of the roofs of buildings 2, 3 and 4 (adjacent to the Kennedy Museum) – over the past several years Ohio University has made a considerable investment at The Ridges, approximately \$25 million -- \$16 million for the renovation of buildings 13, 14 and 18 – the Committee has been brainstorming revenue ideas to repair the holes in the roofs – the estimates range from \$648,000 for a temporary patch over the damaged tarps that were installed over five years ago, to \$4.3 million for long-range repairs– along with investing these millions of dollars at The Ridges the University has been in contact with

developers who might be interested – at this time, the University is reaching out to the City and County to share in the temporary repair of these roofs – the County is willing to explore the possibility of long-term bonds if the University is interested in investing in senior housing – thought has also been given to developing portions of these buildings for condominiums

-Planner – it is clear from the University's perspective that they do not have the resources for the repair of the roofs – when it rains, there is water getting into these buildings because the temporary patch has failed – the City's Historic Preservation Commission would like to look into State opportunities, reaching out to State elected officials for their participation and ideas, the Ohio History Connection, Heritage Ohio, Preservation Ohio, and he recently emailed a representative of the Ohio Appalachian Regional Commission – The Ridges is a regional, if not a Statewide asset – need to work with the University on a solution – there is no long-term plan for these buildings – the University has tried public-private partnerships in the past and are willing to try that again – just have not seen a lot of interest to this point – with tax incentives, this may be the right time – need to be sure due diligence is done

-President – The Ridges Advisory Committee issued a letter to President Nellis and to Board of Trustees Chair Janelle Coleman, on December 16, concurring with the Ohio University Director of Facilities recommendation to do the million dollar repairs – the Committee is also looking at Federal grant opportunities such as, Saving Treasures, through the National Park Service

-Clodfelter – understands the importance of these buildings to our community, but believes exploring funds through other avenues should be exhausted prior to committing City funds

-President – agrees, general revenue at both the City and County level are tight, and the reason other grant opportunities are being sought

-Crowl – The Ridges is a remarkable piece of Athens, and the history is a part of who we are – he is 100% behind preserving these buildings – added, it would be an ideal place for a retirement community

-Kotses – the University has done a lot of great work in restoring The Ridges – continued next steps to preservation are important

-Mayor – as the University begins to vacate other smaller historic structures due to maintenance issues, the Pilcher House and the Crewson House to name two, he would like to work with the University to consider a plan to reinvest the profit from such sales back into the historic buildings at The Ridges

-Planner – with the recent sale of the Pilcher House he is aware that the University included documents as part of the sale that ensured that standards for historic preservation be followed on any renovations

**ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:**

1. Buckeye Hills

**MINUTES: JANUARY 11, 2021**  
**FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Sam Crowl, Chair  
Jeff Risner, Vice-Chair  
Peter Kotses, Member  
Arian Smedley, Member

Administrators and/or

Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely  
Mayor Patterson  
Interim Service-Safety Director Pyle  
Deputy Service-Safety Director Chiki

**ITEMS DISCUSSED:**

- Salary Reduction Pick-up Plan (OPERS)
  - Crowl – the City withholds the employee’s contribution for the pension fund and submits it to OPERS along with the employer’s share – OPERS has requested that the City’s earlier legislation be amended to include an effective date
  
- Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)
  - Crowl – the Federal Act is expiring and the City would like to continue this as an employee benefit
  
  - Risner – questioned how many City employees are taking advantage of this benefit
  - Mayor – a fair number have used it when being asked to quarantine due to potential of high exposure – the agreement will include a statement that those eligible for the vaccination when it becomes available must receive it – last Thursday a number of police officers, firefighters, and staff at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Code Enforcement Office were offered the vaccine through the City-County Health Department – again, those who choose to not receive the COVID-19 vaccination when offered, will not receive the benefit – he feels very strongly that if the vaccine is offered to City employees, that they get it – he does not plan to mandate vaccinations, it will be optional – he believes there is no reason not to be vaccinated, unless there is a warranted pre-existing health condition
  
- Appropriations/Transfers
  - Crowl – explained that a total appropriation of \$106,523, spread over various departments, is needed to cover administrative costs for the 2021 Internal Service budget, along with the following appropriations:
    - \$1,000 to the Cemetery Fund for refunds;
  
    - \$12,000 to the Community Center to pay real estate taxes;

\$6,889.41 to the CARES Act Fund for transfer into the General Fund and used to cover payroll for our public safety forces (this is unspent grant money returned from HAPCAP); adding that the City received approximately \$1.1 million in a BWC dividend to be appropriated as follows:

\$252,000 to the General Fund, Fire, to purchase SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus);

\$570,091 to the General Fund to cover BWC premiums, CPR training, medical box payments, HR medical incentive program, and individual department health and safety needs; and

\$325,000 to the General Fund to purchase two generators, one for the City Building and one for the Law Administration Building (LAB)

Appropriations totaling \$72,602 need to be decreased, whose Internal Services budgets were over-calculated, along with a decrease in the General Fund, Police, by \$40,000 in supplies and professional services and an increase by the same amount in personnel services

The following transfers are needed:

\$135,011.28 from the CARES Act Fund to the General Fund (\$6,889.41 from HAPCAP and \$128,121.87 already appropriated, but not transferred), and

\$175,066 from Parking Garage Fund to the Parking Garage Debt Fund

-President – asked whether bids will be needed for the generators

-Deputy S-S Director – will be seeking an updated quote – will also be looking into a joint purchase option

-Mayor – this is a safety feature – a single generator for both buildings would be optimal

-Kotses – asked where a generator would be located

-Mayor – next to the LAB – adding that there would need to be an exhaust stack that would have to clear the top of the LAB

- Transient Guest Tax Revenue

-Crowl – the current 3-year agreement expired at the end of 2020 and needs to be renewed in order to put the ORC required 50% of the Transient Guest Tax collected into the Tourism Fund as the City's contribution to the Athens County Convention & Visitors Bureau

-Kotses – understands that 50% goes into the General Fund and 50% goes into the Tourism Fund, but wished to clarify that part of the 50% that goes into the General Fund is used to support the Economic Development Council

-Clodfelter – wished to clarify that the 50% that was planned to be used to assist in financing the Bailey Trail System will now simply remain in the General Fund

-Mayor – correct, that \$90,000 will continue to be used for operations within the City's General Fund since the Bailey Trail was contingent upon the County sharing the cost, and the County decided against it – there is no set-aside money for the Bailey Trail

-Crowl – met with the Athens County Convention & Visitors Bureau last week and is pleased with the Board's preparation of the projected budget

- FOP (contract correction)

-Crowl – in final review of the FOP contract, there was a monetary error that was not corrected in the documents provided to Council – the cost of a vest was listed at \$650 – it should have read \$800, the actual cost of the vest, and was in place in the previous contract

- Fire Contract

-Crowl – there is no existing Council legislation affirming the current contract that was negotiated last year and signed in February – this legislation is required and Council will need to ratify it retroactively

- Vacancies

-Crowl – the City has several vacancies at this time – due to the pandemic and budgetary constraints the City has not rushed to fill vacant positions – at this time there is a request to hire a patrol officer – there are currently five positions open in APD; (3) officers; (1) parking enforcement officer; and (1) data entry position

-Fahl – questioned whether it would be possible to hire a social worker instead of a patrol officer

-Crowl – APD currently has a social worker and a professional psychologist on staff – the department needs a patrol officer

-Interim S-S Director – available staffing in APD does not allow for the hiring of a social worker – Council would need to reduce the number of patrol officers and create a new social worker position for that to happen – that being said, the City needs a trained police officer – a licensed social worker has been employed by APD since the late '90's, under the Violence against Women Act – Employee Molly Burchfield is, specifically, a spousal abuse and sexual assault advocate – also on staff is a retiree and former chief clinician from the Athens Behavioral Center since the early '70's – along with the (3) officer vacancies at this time, there are (2) officers eligible to retire this year, and (3) others considering career path changes – hiring police officers is a lengthy process – it would be dangerous for the City not to hire into this position – the person being considered at this time has already been tested – after this hire a new exam will have to be given prior to new hires, and testing at this time is problematic due to the pandemic and social

distancing requirements – does not want APD to become understaffed (6 or 7) vacancies is more than 35% of the available staff

-Fahl – this information is important for our citizens to know

-Crowl – the Administration is also requesting to hire into a Street's Labor Supervisor's position in EPW – as of December 1<sup>st</sup> there were (9) vacancies in EPW – it is important to get this filled

- Public Depositories

-Crowl – the ORC requires that every five (5) years the City designate its public depositories for both the interim monies and active funds – Treasurer McClure will send out applications to eligible financial institutions – the Treasurer and Law Director will then determine the designations to be made to those that qualify – two Resolutions will need approved next Monday for each of the interim monies and active funds, along with a third one in February to make the official depositories – he noted the short turnaround time of March 1, to have this all in place

- Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

-Crowl – this is a 3-year administrative agreement renewal through 2023 – this agreement is required to maintain adequate program oversight and to ensure that communities understand and adhere to RLF terms – deadline for submission is February 1<sup>st</sup>

## **ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:**

1. Pick-up Plan
2. FFCRA
3. Appropriations/Transfer
4. Transient Guest Tax
5. FOP
6. Fire
7. Public Depositories
8. Revolving Loan Fund



**MINUTES**  
**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**JANUARY 11, 2021**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Chris Fahl, Chair  
Jeff Risner, Vice-Chair  
Sarah Grace, Member  
Arian Smedley, Member

Administrators and/or Other Elected Officials  
via Videoconference: President Knisely  
Mayor Patterson  
Planner Logue

**Items Discussed:**

- Economic Development Council (presentation)
  - Fahl – The City, along with the County and Ohio University, support the mission of the EDC
  - Molly Fitzgerald, Executive Director, presented the attached 2020 report
  
  - Mayor – questioned whether funds through the Small Business Relief Fund are still available
  - Fitzgerald – unfortunately, no, the funds have all been allotted
  
  - President – asked if Athens Mold and Machine has moved into the former ATCO building
  - Fitzgerald – some of the offices have moved in, although the funded renovation project has not yet begun – it is a 3-year project
  
  - Clodfelter – questioned Global Cooling’s continued need for the 100,000 SF manufacturing building after COVID-19
  - Fitzgerald – Global Cooling was at max-capacity prior to the pandemic
  
  - Fahl – this report is very encouraging given the economic implications associated with the pandemic
  
- Union Street Downtown Redevelopment District (DRD)
  - Fahl – Council has already approved Seaman’s as a locally designated historic property (the required DRD historic anchor) as part of this DRD
  
  - Planner – explained that DRD’s are used to capture economic development revenues – establishing a DRD must be done through

legislative action – the economic development plan approved in 2018 is also a State requirement – that plan did not mention this specific area as a DRD, so it will need to be updated – prior to Council’s approval of this Union Street DRD, a public hearing must be held with a 30-day public notice to the property owners

-Clodfelter – asked about the area this DRD will encompass – what part of the downtown is included

-Planner – although called Downtown Redevelopment Districts, DRD’s can be applied anywhere within a municipality that meet the DRD guidelines – this DRD is roughly 9.7 acres and incorporates Seaman’s and gas station, Diles Hearing Center, Ohio Health Urgent Care Center, and land currently under construction for a new Ohio Health building – the DRD functions much like a TIF, where for a period of time (10 years), a portion of the real estate taxes that are collected within the district on the improved value is set aside and can be reinvested inside the district for public infrastructure, landscaping, signage, to offset cost of historic preservation design, etc., is very flexible for use, with the hope of getting new economic development to occur – this particular area has a lot of potential for growth – 70% of improved value in real estate taxes would be captured for these various uses

-Smedley – asked if the footprint of the DRD is the same as the Historic Preservation District

-Planner – it is not – only the Seaman’s building – just as the Cider House is the DRD historic anchor on Washington Street

-Kotses – asked whether the taxes on the Ohio Health building that is currently under construction will be considered improved value

-Planner – understands that the taxes would not be assessed until 2022 – if the DRD is established this year it will be included

-Risner – upon completion of the Ohio Health Campus, questioned whether there are any plans to connect that property with Hospital Drive, or if it would continue to be accessed only from Union Street

-Planner – he believes it will connect on the south side

- Titles 9, 37, and 1 (cutting weeds, landscaping and permit fees)
  - Fahl – has been working on updates for best management practices – citizens want to move toward a more resilient and sustainable community – landscapes have a huge impact on our environment, mitigating climate change – she has worked with citizens on updates that include new definitions, reducing invasive species and noxious weeds, and a new section for green infrastructure (celebration trees, a tree bank, and pollinator-friendly front yard program)

-Smedley – support the new programs – she is, however, concerned with the exemption in Title 9, properties that are registered with the City’s native and pollinator-friendly yard registration program are exempt from the grass and weed height restrictions (8’)

-Fahl – the height restriction has been tightened in order to protect plants taller than eight feet

-Smedley – countered that it states grass and weed restrictions, not plants

-Fahl – upkeep language for the pollinator-friendly yards (tidy and litter-free) has been strengthened for easier enforcement

-Smedley – there may be unintended consequences – there is a reason we have height restrictions on grass – if exempt, it could be problematic

-Alan Swank, Townsend Place – asked for clarification on the exemption – appears that a pollinator yard could allow a property owner to go an entire summer without mowing the grass – feels very strongly that this exemption needs to be stricken from the legislation – all properties should be treated equally – he has a pollinator garden, but keeps a nice trim lawn – tall grass is not in the best interest of the City, its residents, or for the health and safety of children playing in the yards

-Clodfelter – is excited about the Tree Bank and Celebration Trees

-Kotses – not sure if the Shade Tree Commission has received this copy of changes, but acknowledged that it was very favorable to an earlier version

-Grace – is pleased that this legislation will help promote and improve native plants in our community – it has long-term benefits

# MINUTES

## TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

### JANUARY 11, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Peter Kotses, Chair  
Sam Crowl, Vice-Chair  
Beth Clodfelter, Member

Administrators and/or

Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely  
Mayor Patterson  
Deputy Service-Safety Director Chiki

#### ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- 2021 Events (street closures, noise, vending)
  - Kotses – anticipates that this year, like last, we may see fewer events due to the pandemic – would like to have legislation approval for those events that have taken place in previous years, with the hope that they will be able to return this spring, summer and fall
  - Deputy S-S Director – any or all of the listed events may not take place this year, but we need to have the framework in place for those that can move forward – the event calendar is very competitive – plan is to have placeholders for our longstanding events – intent with this legislation is to allow the Mayor/Service-Safety Director some latitude through established planning guidelines – not all closures equal large numbers of people in a very confined area – we want these events to be safe, respectful and well-planned, and reflective of our community
  - Kotses – no new events will be included in the legislation
  - Deputy S-S Director – new events will continue to come before Council separately for discussion, until established

#### ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. 2021 Events (street closures, noise, vending)