

CITY OF CHARDON SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes

September 27, 2021

Service Committee Members Present: Andrew Blackley, Jeffrey Smock

Also Present:

Ben Chojnacki, Law Director
Doug Courtney, City Engineer
Jim Flaiz, County Prosecutor
Chris Grau, City Council
Paul Hornyak, Public Service
Director
Nancy McArthur, City Council
Heather Hudson Means, City
Council

Dan Meleski, Mayor
Gerry Morgan, County
Administrator
Amy Patterson, Maple Leaf
Becky Repasky, Secretary
Mate Rogonjic, Finance Director
Randy Sharpe, City Manager
Chuck Walder, County Auditor

Andrew Blackley, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Smock asked for Mr. Richard Depenbrok to have ‘as HOA President and speaking on behalf of Burling Oval HOA’ added. Mr. Courtney asked for ‘storm sewer to be changed to sanitary sewer’. Mr. Smock made a motion to approve the minutes of September 2, 2021. It was seconded by Mr. Blackley. The vote carried 2-0.

DISCUSS CHANGING THE TRAFFIC PATTERN IN THE ALLEY

Mr. Sharpe reviewed the timeline of communications between Mr. Morgan and Judge Grendell from October, 2020, December 2020, and spring of 2021. Mr. Sharpe stated this was in response to a letter from County Administrator Gerry Morgan and Judge Grendell asking City Staff to determine if it was possible for the Alley to be made into a one-way street.

Mr. Chojnacki explained on December 9, 2020, the Geauga County Administrator sent a correspondence letter to Randy Sharpe asking if it is possible to make the Alley behind the Courthouse Annex (the ‘Alley’) a one-way street, and potentially restrict parking or stationing of vehicles in the Alley between the hours of 7:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. In March of 2021, Judge Grendell sent another letter requesting the same thing. City Staff met with Judge Grendell to discuss the request and determined it has the authority to make the Alley open to only one-way traffic (north to south direction) and further discussion took place to make it a ‘no loitering’ area. The City sent letters to effected business owners and invited all parties to the Service Committee to discuss this proposal. If any action is to be taken, the first step will be for the Service Committee to consider the proposed changes, listen to public concern and either make a recommendation to City Council or not. Draft legislation would be need to amend Section 305.11 of the Code to designate the north section of the Alley from Center Street to Court Street as a one-way street with restricted access (i.e. no stopping and parking) during specified times. If Council passes this request, Staff will prepare legislation to be considered for enactment at a future public meeting or meetings. Mr. Chojnacki explained the City controls the Public Right-of-Way and it will be for the Service Committee to determine how much of that Public Right-of-Way the City will control.

Mr. Blackley asked what, if any, ramifications can take place if the order from Judge Grendell is not complied with. Mr. Chojnacki explained certain parties within the City Staff could be held in contempt of court and given a fine. He reminded the Committee this will be a process to go through first.

Mr. Blackley asked if anyone for the Probate and Juvenile Court would like to speak. No one from the Court was present to speak.

Mr. Gerry Morgan, the County Administrator spoke to the Committee. Mr. Morgan explained the letter sent to Mr. Sharpe was not a formal request; but to see if the City could change the traffic pattern. He stated the County has not made an official request for this change and was open to discussions.

Mr. Blackley stated there is an official request in an email from Frank Antonucci to Chuck Walder. Mr. Morgan said he was not aware of that letter. Mr. Blackley shared that email was forwarded from Chuck Walder to Randy Sharpe.

Mr. Blackley asked Mr. Courtney if he has an opinion on the traffic change. Mr. Courtney said with no traffic counts or traffic data he could not determine what is best for the Alley at this time. Mr. Blackley pointed out that traffic does stack in that area at different times of the day. Mr. Smock agreed and added the Square creates additional traffic.

Mr. Jim Flaiz, the County Prosecutor spoke to the Committee. Mr. Flaiz presented the Committee with a printed aerial map of the Alley for everyone to look at during the discussion. Mr. Flaiz explained there are no safety concerns in the Alley, as listed by Judge Grendell in his reasoning for changing the traffic of the Alley to one-way. Mr. Flaiz said he first learned of this change while at a business on the Square from a customer on September 16th. He obtained a letter that was sent to the Chamber of Commerce and that letter was not sent to him. He states the letter reads this change will prohibit loitering and will change the traffic pattern to only be north-to-south on the Alley. Mr. Flaiz stated there is no way to prevent loitering - as with the Workman brothers on the Square; and he does not understand how the north-to-south direction is safer when employees exiting the building open the doors to the north, thus making it harder to see oncoming traffic – it becomes a blind spot to pedestrians. He said if the direction is changed, the parking lot will have to be re-stripped as it is slanted from the south direction. It will create difficulties for businesses receiving deliveries from their vendors. Mr. Flaiz explained this was not an ‘order’ nor is it a binding order from the Ohio Supreme Court; no administrator can implement an ‘order’ and no one from the City can be held in contempt of court. Mr. Flaiz said he requested public records of everything regarding the Alley, and as of yet, has not received any documents. He said he never received a call back from Mr. Sharpe. He explained his office which employs over forty (40) people, does not have to stay in the City/Chardon Square – he chooses to stay in that office because he likes the Square. He asked why this decision was made without talking to the County Prosecutor’s Office. Mr. Flaiz said he has never been afraid to park in the Alley and he is more of a target than Judge Grendell who has personal security and is escorted to and from the building. Mr. Flaiz stated this is an unnecessary decision and the north-to-south direction is a bad idea.

Mr. Blackley stated for the record and to Mr. Flaiz that no decision has been made because a decision such as this would need to be made by City Council; and City Council did not approve this change.

Mr. Chuck Walder addressed the Committee. Mr. Walder stated this Ohio Supreme Court security assessment was done in 2013 and that makes it outdated and obsolete. Mr. Walder requested a new updated report and to include all four (4) Judges in Geauga County. Mr. Walder shared that it is very hard to know when court is in session for the traffic patterns to change as nothing is publicized. Mr. Walder shared he learned of this change and the letter from Mr. Sharpe at Beans Coffee Shop on the Square on September 16th. He said the City and County not working together is not a good relationship. He said the parking in the alley will need to be reversed and the proposal will increase traffic and make it more unsafe. He stated the letter from Mr. Sharpe made it sound as though this is a done deal and he thanked Mr. Blackley for the clarification that it is not. Mr. Walder said the order is only a recommendation which can be altered or ignored. He said the City made an assumption that this was a requirement.

Mr. Blackley stated City Council has not made any decision and he apologized to Mr. Flaiz and Mr. Walder for not being informed and for the letter making it seem the traffic would change. Mr. Blackley said he values them and their presence on the Square and would like for them to stay.

Mr. Sharpe said this was his fault and apologized to Mr. Flaiz and Mr. Walder. He said it was not his intention to omit them from the letters that were sent out. He had a spreadsheet of County employees and it was a misunderstanding that the Prosecutor's Office and Auditor's Office was not included under Geauga County Offices. He said he now understands the departments work independently. He said this was not intentional and wanted all along to be transparent about this discussion. Mr. Chojnacki commented the order from Judge Grendell made the City Staff believe this represented all of the County position on the matter.

Mrs. Nancy McArthur, City Councilman, addressed the Committee. She said she was made aware when all of Council was told. She said communication among the City and County needs to be improved. She said she would like to see the City work with the County more. She explained yes, the departments within the County work independently of one another.

Mr. Grau addressed the Committee. Mr. Grau asked if there were specifics listed to the "safety concerns" by Judge Grendell. Mr. Blackley read the order but stated there is nothing specific. Mr. Grau suggested this topic come to Safety Committee for discussion and review.

Mr. Smock stated he only found out about this issue a couple weeks ago when it appeared as a topic on the Service Committee agenda. Mr. Smock stated he values the presence of Mr. Flaiz and Mr. Walder on the Square and will work to keep them on the Square. Mr. Smock said he visited the Alley and agrees the north-to-south direction is not a good idea. He said he read the Ohio Supreme Court order and he agrees he did not read it to state this must be done. He said to turn the entire area into a one-way direction does not make any sense. He said if there are security issues, the County will need to address those issues. He stated he values Mr. Flaiz's and Mr. Walder's opinions and wants to keep them on the Square.

Mayor Dan Meleski addressed the Committee. He apologized for omitting Mr. Flaiz and Mr. Walder from the list. Mr. Meleski said communications between the City and County need to improve and a better understanding of the area needs to be had. He said the letter was worded badly and for the topic be sent back for further review.

Mrs. McArthur clarified there has not been any specific incident that warranted this order. Mr. Blackley said no. Mr. Chojnacki said just the outline of discussions Mr. Sharpe has had with certain County officials. Mrs. McArthur added there is currently a sign posted in the Alley "no one is allowed back here". Mr. Blackley said that was not erected by the City. Mr. Chojnacki said he was unaware of the sign. Staff said they will look into it.

Both Mr. Blackley and Mr. Smock did not make a recommendation for the Alley to become a one-way road. The discussion will be sent to City Council to send the discussion to the Safety Committee where a traffic study will be requested and both Police and Fire Chiefs will be asked to contribute to the discussion.

REVIEW THE 2022-2026 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Mr. Rogonjic presented the proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for 2022-2026. More emphasis should be placed on the first few years of the forecast as it is based on assumptions and projections. From 2022-2026, \$23.9 million is estimated to be spent on infrastructure and facility improvements, equipment and vehicles. Grant and loan percentages are included for the projects. New sidewalk installation on Washington Street (Court Street to Water Street) has been moved to construction in 2025. The water main on South Street is recommended for replacement which will cost an additional \$346,100. An 8-vehicle car port for the Police Department is included. Lack of available funds moved the E Park Street Parking Project to 2026. New sidewalk installation on Wilson Mills Road (108 to 386 Wilson Mills) has been included for safety concerns brought up by residents. The installation will occur the same year as the sight distance improvements in 2025 at a cost estimate of \$248,000. Two major water related projects are included for 2022 contingent upon grant requests submitted to ODOD. This includes Clearwell water tank #2 which will add a second 356,000-gallon tank to the City's water tank system. The cost is an estimated \$1,115,700 with a grant request of \$804,700. The second is a water line loop for Hidden Glen Trail to Woodiebrook Road. This loop will serve as a second means of distribution for finished water to the system. Total estimated project cost is \$608,300 with a grant fund request of \$488,500. Replacement of the sanitary sewer line on Allyn Dr. from Maple Ave. to Downing Dr., has

been included for construction in 2023 at an estimated cost of \$235,400. The City's traffic signalization system has been included in 2024 at a cost of \$1,486,600. Improvements to the parking lot at Old Village Hall and the Fire Station have been included for construction in 2026 for an estimated cost of \$96,200.

The General Fund is projected with positive ending balances in each year of the CIP, with balances exceeding 10% of the available resources in 2022 and 2023. The Water Operating Fund and Sewer Operating Fund are forecasted to exceed the 10% reserve balance in 2022 and 2023. Due to projected flat revenues that result from the police operating and pension levies, the General Fund is projected to cover more costs of the Police Department. Due to the declining balances in the Court's special revenue funds, the General Fund is projected to provide an increasing level of support for Court operations.

Municipal income taxes are projected to increase 3% annually; collections have withstood the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Revenues in the water and sewer funds are based on the rates approved by City Council on February 11, 2021. Municipal court costs and fines in the General Fund are projected to increase in 2022 based on the diminishing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic impact.

In accordance with the Code, the forecast assumes that the City will continue assessing the system development charge after June 30, 2021 to repay the General Fund for transfers made in prior years. Gas and motor vehicle license taxes in the SCMR Fund are projected at a combined total of \$560,000 per year, based on actual revenues in 2020 and estimate for 2021. Wage increases are projected based on the income tax formula in the collective bargaining agreements which include: 2.5% in 2022 and 2023, 3% thereafter.

Health insurance costs are forecasted to increase 2% in 2022 based on the renewal offer from the current provider; while dental and vision costs are forecasted to remain constant in 2022 with the current provider. Thereafter, anticipation of 5% increases.

For the most part, line items in the operating and contract categories are projected at either the 5-year average or at an annual inflationary increase of 3%.

The figures presented for 2021 reflect the original permanent appropriations and amended appropriations approved by council at the time of preparing these forecasts; as well as the original and amended certificates of resources approved by the County Budget Commission.

Mr. Smock asked if any street work will be included on Allynd Blvd. for the sanitary sewer replacement project. Mr. Courtney said no, the sewer work doesn't necessarily require street repair but it could. Mr. Smock asked for more explanation for the workshop at the cemetery. Mr. Sharpe said both recreation and the cemetery crews use the current space and this building will give more space for the new equipment coming. Mr. Smock asked if the sidewalk connection are on both sides of the road on Downing Drive, Allynd Blvd., and Basquin. Mr. Sharpe said he is not sure yet, but those streets were listed as priority on the NOACA Study list.

Mr. Blackley said this CIP was beautifully written. Mr. Smock stated he likes how aggressive this CIP is.

EV CHARGING STATION UPDATE

Mr. Hornyak shared that the electrical charging station equipment has been received and the contractor for the installation will be on site this week to install the equipment.

Mr. Blackley asked if there will be signage. Mr. Hornyak said they will wait to see how illuminating the stations are. Mr. Sharpe said electric vehicles themselves, have location identifiers. Mr. Blackley asked if a press release will be sent to the papers. Mr. Sharpe said yes and added there will be a charging fee for those that use it. Mr. Blackley asked if the City has any electric vehicles. Mr. Sharpe said no, but Staff does have discussions on hybrids as well as electric vehicles. Mr. Hornyak added they are on state-bid.

CANFIELD DRIVE AND CHARDON AVENUE UPDATE

Mr. Hornyak said the contractor is slightly behind. He explained residents are continually updated about the project. He said Canfield Drive will not be started until Chardon Avenue is completed. Mr. Courtney said asphalt installation between North St. and Memorial Dr. will take place this week. Existing roadway will be removed and new stone sub base will be installed.

Mr. Blackley asked for a conclusion date. Mr. Courtney said late October.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Smock said he loves the new location of the sidewalks on Fifth Avenue and Washington Street. He requested the pile of dirt at the corner to be taken off. Mr. Hornyak said they will have the contractor take care of that.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – none

ADJOURN

Mr. Smock made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Blackley seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

ANDREW BLACKLEY, SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Rebecca Repasky, Secretary