



City of Parma Heights Council Meeting Minutes January 22, 2024

The Parma Heights City Council meeting for Monday, January 22, 2024 was called to order by Council President Rounds at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Council President Rounds, Councilmembers Durichko, Palmisano, DeSouza, Kolezynski, Maruschak and Council Clerk Allen.

Pledge of Allegiance was spoken

Council President Rounds asked for a motion to excuse Councilman Haase. Moved by Councilwoman DeSouza; seconded by Councilwoman Maruschak.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: Durichko, Palmisano, DeSouza, Kolezynski, Maruschak and Rounds

Councilman Haase has been excused.

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Gallo, Director of Law Schneider, Recreation Director Bacci, Service Director Sepik, and Finance Director Iaconis.

COUNCIL MINUTES

January 8, 2024 Parma Heights City Council Minutes

Councilwoman DeSouza motioned; seconded by Councilwoman Maruschak to approve the City Council Minutes of January 8, 2024.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: Palmisano, DeSouza, Kolezynski, Maruschak, Durichko, Rounds

Minutes Approved

REPORTS FROM MAYOR AND DIRECTORS

Council President Rounds continued with the Directors Reports and began with Director Bacci....

Recreation Director Bacci: We have received a NOPEC Grant for Earth Day in the Commons in the amount of \$2,000. Our 3rd Annual Earth Day in the commons will be held April 27th from 1 to 4:00 p.m. We'll have some food trucks, live animal presentations and some tables set up including North East Ohio various Environmental leaders. NOPEC included some extra funding to extend our Yoga in the Park Program. With these funds we'll be able to do it twice monthly from May to September. Our solar eclipse party with the Parma City School district, they will host it at Valley Forge on April 4th at 6:00 p.m. The actual eclipse is due to happen on Monday the 8th but the kids are on Spring Break, so we're going to do some things before they leave. Spring and soccer registration will open on February 2nd at midnight. Spring soccer piggy backs off of Fall soccer so there will only be limited age groups for registering, Fall Soccer will open back up for all age groups. Softball, Baseball, T-Ball, full registration up on February 2nd. Lastly, Katelyn and Lisa will be doing a valentine craft on Saturday, February 3rd from 12 to 2:00 p.m. at Cassidy Theatre. This will be a Valentines Day Puzzle.

Council President Rounds: Any questions or comments for Director Bacci? Seeing none. Service Director Sepik.....

Service Director Sepik: Thank you, Council President. The holiday lights recycling program is this Saturday, January 27th at the Service Garage from 9:00 to noon. We'll take the lights, power strips, cords, electrical cords, we send them down to the county to the Solid Waste District, they strip all the metal, weigh it, donate all the money they get to the Lights for Lions at the Zoo. A couple months ago there were Ohio Building Standards legislation that was passed, as of March 1st there will be an update and ours will automatically update. We had a little snowstorm last weekend, the crew worked around the clock to meet our high standards of roads that we are required to plow and maintain. Each main road was plowed a minimum of 8 times, that includes the semi-mains also, side streets were plowed a minimum of 4 times and cul-de-sacs were each done once and salting throughout the entire program. We also did the walking path behind the theatre and we received many calls on that, people want a safe place to walk. We went through 500 tons of salt, we have two salt bins, I've ordered about 600 tons so our salt bins will be full.

Council President Rounds. Any other questions or comments for Director Sepik? Councilwoman Maruschak.....

Councilwoman Maruschak added that she felt they did a phenomenal job plowing. I live in a little cul-de-sac just watching them, it was very coordinated, every year it just gets better.

Councilwoman DeSouza added the streets were done, hearing from residents, seeing Facebook posts, people always mention they drive through Parma Heights it's great and then when they get to another un-named city things come to a screeching halt. But you did mention that you're doing the walkway behind the Cassidy and a couple people asked about the pathway at Radlick, is that possible to consider because a lot of people walk back and forth between Ackley and Manorford?

Director Sepik stated that he will see if the equipment will fit back there so the lawns don't get torn up.

Council President Rounds asked if there were any further comments for Director Sepik? Seeing none. Finance Director Iaconis.....

Finance Director Iaconis: Thank you, Council President. We are still working on closing everything officially, I wanted to go over some of the major highlights and what you can expect moving forward in my reports. Nathan Hale is completed; the total came to \$4,116,939.26. This project stayed on budget with only 1 change order, still waiting on one disbursement coming back to us for \$50,000.00. Our payroll is comprised of \$10,574,000 that is about ½ of our expenditures and then adding on to that we are self-insured medical is \$2,761,000 factoring pensions for our employees are also an expenditure. Our income tax collections were \$11,343,000 that was up almost a million over the previous year. Really happy with our service that we've been getting since switching to RITA. Amazing data at your fingertips. I'm going to start talking more about Mayor's Court; for the entire year there were 3,450 tickets written. That translates into \$268,400 coming to the city. There are other fees that go to state, other organizations but that's the amount that came back to the general fund. That's were we are now that we've spent all our ARPA funds and back to square one.

Mayor Gallo asked the director to go over what the city contributes to police and fire pensions?

Finance Director added that employees, it's 12 ¼ % they pay off of their gross, the city makes a matching contribution for police officers it's 19 ½ % and fire department is 24%. Our property tax distributions are .3 Mills are earmarked to go to police and fire pension. Everyone else is covered under Ohio Public Employee with an employee contribution of 10% and the city contribution of 14%.

Council President Rounds asked are those percentages decided by law? Or are those negotiated?

Finance Director Iaconis responded that those are dictated by the pension boards and approved by their boards, the state. I know we have talked about eventually matching up to 25 – 26% over several years. We submitted information for the hearing coming out against it, it's not a sustainable increase.

Mayor Gallo added that there were several mayor's that went down and spoke out against it in Columbus. When legislation is forwarded to Columbus, often times communities aren't reached out to, to see how things would impact the communities. Specific groups organize themselves to go speak for or against the legislation on behalf of the communities. Again, we haven't heard anything so hopefully they're listening. I don't know if the community realizes how much cities are required to match when it comes to police and fire pensions, salaries. Majority of city budgets are related to police and fire.

Council President Rounds made the comment that we have to take all that in. If there is only so much money, and it has to go there, then suddenly programs and salaries and everything else are at risk because you have to meet this number. Do we know, or could we find out the name of the legislator that is proposing the legislation? Maybe City Council could send a letter down to Columbus as well.

Mayor Gallo stated that it's House Bill 296 and primary sponsors are Cindy Abrams and Thomas Hall. There is a list of Cosponsors on there as well that includes Gayle Manning.

Councilwoman Durichko asked if she heard her correctly that income tax was up? Do you think that could be from the stay-at-home workers?

Director Iaconis responded yes; it was up about a million dollars. That is absolutely a portion of that, we started seeing an increase in 2021, collections are a year behind. People are paying their taxes for 2023, so during the pandemic we started to see that increase.

Council President Rounds added to Director Iaconis that he understands how busy your department has been in 2023 and so appreciates the work that your department has done, 3 contract negotiations besides the day-to-day stuff, I appreciate that very much. Any further questions for the Director Iaconis? Seeing none. It's good to see you, Director Schneider.

Director Schneider added that it's a pleasure to be here.

Council President Rounds: Mayor Gallo....

Mayor Gallo: Thank you, Mr. President. The Senior Center served and delivered 1,207 meals over the past two weeks. They played the first set of volleyball games against the Donna Smallwood Center and they lost. The trophy is in Parma now. They will play again in the spring so hopefully we'll get that trophy back. During the winter they are trying to keep trips for the seniors more local, since the weather is so unpredictable. We had a discussion today, that when the schools close, our Senior Center will also be closed. This way we can stay on task on what the schools are doing that's a great indicator for the weather. If there are any questions on if the Senior Center is open, we can refer to the school closing listings.

Council President Rounds added that he can see that being a good idea, especially not encouraging people to come out during these days. Will that impact the delivery of meals at all?

Mayor Gallo responded that they didn't discuss the delivery of meals. Thank you for your support of the Service Department during snow events like we had recently. They work very long hours, very diligent. Thank you and the community has been wonderful and understanding. You wouldn't believe the amount of feedback that I get from

people that live outside of our community but travel through our city and see the difference once they get into Parma Heights. Lastly, not much of an update regarding the library, no significant changes, we are still having conversations about how much of the property we want to hand over to them and thank you to Director Schneider, he's communicating with their Law Department just drawing up an agreement as far as the land goes and how the future looks. He's on top of all that. That concludes my report.

Council President Rounds thanked the mayor and asked if there were any other comments or questions for Mayor Gallo? Seeing none.

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Rounds: If you would like to make a public comment, please address your comments to me as the Council President. You have up to 3 minutes to speak, state your name and address.

Tammy Sebastian, 6814 Revere. I'd like to propose something to council regarding the weekly bulk collection as another perspective to consider. Not dangling the carrot and then taking it away, but allowing the tax payers to experience that weekly bulk pick up and then encouraging during that time period during your Ward meetings, stay transparent and keeping the community aware of potentially seeing some increases. I elect you to make the right decisions, and if we are constantly concerned about this group and that group, it's hard to move forward. But being transparent is always possible. I want to thank Bob, I think it's a group effort so thanks to the Service Department, Mayor, Council and we talk about the roads, I think they do a great job on the aprons as well. I wanted to also thank the Mayor and Council for staying connected to the schools, not just going into the schools and reading. But now I see Police Chief and Council showing up and staying involved. Especially now since we are going through this strategic planning process, but I encourage all to stay connected as well. You can get back to me on this, but what can we do to the high pensions and the matches? There has to be other options, but it feels like a stuck situation.

Mayor Gallo stated that those thresholds are set by law. Right now, there is no choice but to pay them and so does every other city. As far as those increases are concerned, it's about being good stewards about the tax dollars, it's about being able to sustain a city, make sure our other departments are represented just as well as police and fire. I suggested giving back to our local government fund to help pay any increases.

Council President Rounds thanked the mayor and asked if there were any other comments or questions? Seeing none.

LEGISLATION

2023 – 89: RESOLUTION TO BE READ BY TITLE ONLY

Councilwoman Maruschak motioned; seconded by Councilwoman DeSouza to read the following resolution by title only.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: DeSouza, Kolezynski, Maruschak, Durichko, Palmisano, Rounds

Clerk Allen read: **RESOLUTION. 2023 – 89**

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATION TO DISPOSE OF OBSOLETE CITY VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT AT A PUBLIC SALE THROUGH GOVPLANET/IRONPLANET

Council President Rounds stated that this is the third reading for this resolution are there any questions or comments? Seeing none.

Councilwoman Maruschak motioned; seconded by Councilwoman DeSouza to move for passage.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: Kolezynski, Maruschak, Durichko, Palmisano, DeSouza, Rounds

Resolution Passes

2024 - 3: RESOLUTION TO BE READ BY TITLE ONLY

Councilwoman Durichko motioned; seconded by Councilwoman DeSouza to read the following resolution by title only.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: Maruschak, Durichko, Palmisano, DeSouza, Kolezynski, Rounds

Clerk Allen read: **RESOLUTION NO. 2024 - 3**

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BOWEN + ASSOCIATES, INC., MUNICIPAL ENGINEER, TO PREPARE THE PLANS, SPECIFICATIONS, AND COST ESTIMATES FOR THE 2024 STREET REHABILITATION PROJECT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Councilwoman Durichko motioned; seconded by Councilwoman DeSouza to Suspend the Rules.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: Durichko, Palmisano, DeSouza, Kolezynski, Maruschak, Rounds

Council President Rounds asked if are there any questions or comments on this resolution? Seeing none.

Councilwoman Durichko motioned; seconded by Councilwoman DeSouza to move for passage.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: Palmisano, DeSouza, Kolezynski, Maruschak, Durichko, Rounds

Resolution Passes

2024 - 4: ORDINANCE TO BE READ BY TITLE ONLY

Councilman Kolezynski motioned; seconded by Councilwoman DeSouza to read the following ordinance by title only.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: DeSouza, Kolezynski, Maruschak, Durichko, Palmisano, Rounds

Clerk Allen read: **ORDINANCE NO. 2024 - 4**

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING AN EXPENDITURE FOR THE 2024 STREET REHABILITATION PROJECT, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO ADVERTISE FOR COMPETITIVE BIDS, AND AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE ADMINISTRATION TO ENTER INTO A WRITTEN CONTRACT WITH THE LOWEST AND BEST BIDDER THEREFORE, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Councilman Kolezynski motioned; seconded by Councilwoman DeSouza to Suspend the Rules.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: Kolezynski, Maruschak, Durichko, Palmisano, DeSouza, Rounds

Council President Rounds asked if are there any questions or comments on this ordinance? Seeing none.

Councilman Kolezynski motioned; seconded by Councilwoman DeSouza to move for passage.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: Maruschak, Durichko, Palmisano, DeSouza, Kolezynski, Rounds

Ordinance Passes

2024 - 5: RESOLUTION TO BE READ BY TITLE ONLY

Councilwoman Palmisano motioned; seconded by Councilwoman DeSouza to read the following resolution by title only.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: Durichko, Palmisano, DeSouza, Kolezynski, Maruschak, Rounds

Clerk Allen read: **RESOLUTION NO. 2024 - 5**

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATION TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION, ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF PARMA HEIGHTS, FOR THE OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (OEPA), H2OHIO RIVERS INITIATIVE: CHLORIDE REDUCTION GRANT PROGRAM, AND FURTHER AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATION TO EXECUTE AGREEMENTS, IF ANY, TO ACCEPT SUCH GRANT FUNDING, IF AWARDED, AND TO EXPEND FUNDS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Councilwoman Palmisano motioned; seconded by Councilwoman DeSouza to Suspend the Rules.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: Palmisano, DeSouza, Kolezynski, Maruschak, Durichko, Rounds

Council President Rounds asked if are there any questions or comments on this resolution? Seeing none.

Councilwoman Palmisano motioned; seconded by Councilwoman DeSouza to move for passage.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: DeSouza, Kolezynski, Maruschak, Durichko, Palmisano, Rounds

Resolution Passes

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Rounds asked: Can I have a motion for adjournment? Councilwoman DeSouza motioned; seconded by Councilwoman Maruschak to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk Allen called Roll Call: Aye: Kolezynski, Maruschak, Durichko, Palmisano, DeSouza, Rounds

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.



Barbara Allen
Clerk of Council



Tom Rounds
President of Council