

March 18, 2021

President Henry Comer called the regular meeting of the London City Council to order. He led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance and observed a moment of silent reflection.

CLERK CALLED ROLL: Brenda Russell, present; Josh Peters, present; Rich Hays, present; Anthony Smith, present. Absent: Bryan Robinson, Andrew Hitt, Carla Blazier

MINUTES of the previous meeting were approved as received.

COMMUNICATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

PUBLIC HEARINGS: Motion by Hays to adjourn to public hearing for Ordinance Nos. 111-21, 112-21, 113-21, and 114-21, second by Peters. Roll call: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Smith, yes; Russell, yes.

Mr. Robert Reardon, 16 Chandler Avenue, addressed council. He had not been approached to sign the petition for the alley vacation. He was concerned because the alley leads to his garage.

Les Barnhart, 61 Chandler Avenue, shared that alley also serves as a driveway for 65 Chandler Avenue. There is also approximately two acres in the middle of the block that the Puckett's would no longer have access to if the alley were closed. It could hurt the long-term value of their property. It is a well-kept area.

Mark Sexton, 210 Virginia Avenue, explained that the majority of the alley is in the Glade Run addition. There is just one foot that's in the Riddle addition. The alley runs parallel with Virginia Avenue behind properties. He has lived there for 35 years and the alley has never been used. A driveway has been built on it, there's a 100-year-old tree in the middle of it, and it serves no purpose.

The Puckett's will be able to access their property directly behind their house. The lot is maybe an acre.

He spoke with Tom Hale, building and zoning. He understood that if the alley is vacated, the portion directly behind him, would become his property.

There was discussion that a when an alley closes, it is split down the middle between abutting property owners.

Councilwoman Russell questioned if 65 Chandler Avenue would be able to access their garage, if a future, abutting owner would put a fence in the middle of the driveway!

Councilman Peters pointed out that if the alley were vacated, 18 Columbia Avenue could also put a fence up, in the middle not giving 16 Columbia Avenue enough room to access their garage.

If the alley closed 65 Chandler Avenue would be affected by it too, if the abutting owner would decide to put up a fence.

Fences are not to be permanent on alley vacations where utilities still need access to the area.

Jane Beathard noted that her tenants, 18 Columbia Avenue, use the alley to access their garage.

Mr. Reardon wondered if it would be possible to vacate the alley starting 150' back from the street.

President Comer felt this needs looked into further. He will check with the law director about possible variance for neighbor's driveways in question or other solutions.

REGULAR MEETING: Motion by Hays to adjourn the public hearing and reconvene the regular meeting, second by Russell. Roll to reconvene: Hays, yes; Smith, yes; Russell, yes; Peters, yes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion by Peters to enter into executive session for appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of an employee or official to consider employment or compensation of a public employee or official, second by Hays.

REGULAR MEETING: Motion by Hays to reconvene the regular meeting, second by Smith. Roll to reconvene: Smith, yes; Russell, yes; Peters, yes; Hays, yes.

AUDIENCE CONCERNS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilwoman Russell attended the finance committee meeting. The auditor balanced out the February books. Their new software program is up and running. Department heads are learning the new program.

There is legislation to amend the strength ordinance for the tax department. Amy Marsh has been running the tax department as an assistant tax director for years. When the previous tax director left, no one was hired to take his place.

The police department eliminated the administrative assistant position, to offset salary increases and have spread those duties among themselves.

Administration and the finance committee decided to work without a capital budget as departments have continued to spend wisely. She thanked all the department heads.

She also attended the CRA meeting.

Councilman Peters attended the public service and parks and recreation committee meetings. The street department has been opening the park restrooms, cleaning city hall upstairs, performing tree trimming, securing quotes for a new truck and getting school street ready for the storm water project.

The parks and recreation department has been busy planning summer youth programming, hiring lifeguards, and discussing plans for the pool opening.

The next public services meeting is April 7th.

Councilman Hays attended the March 9 public safety meeting and read the report from that meeting. Patrolman Hunter Carly is in the field training process. The police department will be conducting a needs assessment for a new building. They eliminated the administrative assistant position to offset salary increases. Dispatcher Ken Riffitt resigned.

The fire department/EMS are attending training, conducting new hire orientation, and participating in webinars for new software.

The next public safety meeting is April 13.

CITY OFFICIAL REPORTS: Mayor Pat Closser gave his administrative report at this time. (attached)

OLD BUSINESS:

ORDINANCE 111-21 Sponsored by: Andrew Hitt AN ORDINANCE VACATING AN ALLEY Motion by Hitt to place on fourth reading, second by Russell. Clerk read.

Motion by Hays to adopt, second by Peters. Roll to adopt: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Smith, yes; Russell, yes.

ADOPTED

ORDINANCE 112-21 Sponsored by: Andrew Hitt AN ORDINANCE VACATING AN ALLEY Motion by Hays to place on fourth reading, second by Russell. Clerk read.

Motion by Peters to adopt, second by Hays. Roll to adopt: Hays, yes; Smith, yes; Russell, yes; Peters, yes. **ADOPTED.**

ORDINANCE 113-21 Sponsored by: Andrew Hitt AN ORDINANCE VACATING AN ALLEY Motion by Hays to place on fourth reading, second by Russell. Clerk read.

Motion by Hays to place on fourth reading, second by Russell. Clerk read.

Motion by Russell to adopt, second by Hays. Roll to adopt: Smith, yes; Russell, yes; Peters, yes; Hays, yes. **ADOPTED.**

ORDINANCE 114-21 Sponsored by: Andrew Hitt AN ORDINANCE VACATING AN ALLEY. Motion by Hays to place on fourth reading, second by Russell. Clerk read.

Councilman Hays pointed out there were too many questions brought up this evening.

Councilwoman Russell was concerned that future property owners may not agree with the alley vacation and there would be nothing to stop them from putting up a fence that could potentially block their neighbor from getting in their garage. She wondered if it would be possible to leave just the ends of the alley open for their driveways.

Councilman Peters felt that the petition needs to be filled out correctly with names and all the addresses. If not, send back to the petitioner.

Council decided this needs to be investigated further and discussed with the law director.

LEFT ON 4TH READING.

NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION 131-21 Sponsored by: Rich Hays A RESOLUTION INCREASING APPROPRIATIONS Motion by Hays to place on first reading, second by Russell. Clerk read. Councilman Hays explained this is for the MARCS grant. It needs to be appropriated before expenditures.

LEFT ON 1ST READING.

RESOLUTION 132-21 Sponsored by: Brenda Russell A RESOLUTION INCREASING APPROPRIATIONS Motion by Russell to place on first reading, second by Hays. Clerk read. Councilwoman Russell explained this is from the general fund to the Mayor's for this year's fireworks display.

Councilman Hays would like to amend it at the next meeting for an additional \$5,000. He felt that the community deserved a great show after this past year of COVID restrictions. Mayor Closser said he could definitely put on an even better show with the additional funds.

LEFT ON 1ST READING.

ORDINANCE 133-21 Sponsored by: Brenda Russell AN ORDINANCE FOR STRENGTHS ON JOB DESCRIPTIONS (attachment) Motion by Hays to place on first reading, second by Russell. Clerk read.

Councilwoman Russell explained that amended strength ordinance will promote Amy Marsh as the tax director. The position had never been filled after the resignation of the previous director. She and the other assistant tax director have been running the office and fulfilling the duties. The strength ordinance will be changed to one tax director and one assistant tax director. Amy will be required to attend meetings.

Mayor Closser added that he wanted to be transparent in his decision to appoint her as the tax director. She's been running the office all along and felt she was ready to better herself and take on the position.

President Henry commended her on the good job she's been doing!

LEFT ON 1ST READING.

ORDINANCE 134-21 Sponsored by: Rich Hays AN ORDINANCE AMENDING 242 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES (exhibit) Motion by Hays to place on first reading, second by Peters. Clerk read.

Councilman Hays noted that this is just “housekeeping” designating the department appropriately as the “Emergency Medical Service Provider for the City of London”.

LEFT ON 1ST READING

RESOLUTION 135-21 Sponsored by: Brenda Russell A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TAX INCENTIVE REVIEW COUNCIL (attachment) Motion by Hays to place on first reading, second by Russell. Clerk read.

Councilwoman Russell stated that all the CRA's were approved and renewed for another year.

LEFT ON 1ST READING

RESOLUTION 136-21 Sponsored by: Anthony Smith A RESOLUTION ASSESSING THE COSTS AND COLLECTING DELINQUENT WATER CHARGES Motion by Hays to place on first reading, second by Peters. Clerk read.

Councilman Smith explained that this particular water account is very delinquent. This will authorize the BPU to work with the county auditor to get it paid through owner's property taxes.

LEFT ON 1ST READING.

RESOLUTION 137-20 Sponsored by: Bryan Robinson A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR TO PARTICIPATE IN CONTRACTS OF THE STATE OF OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Motion by Hays to place on first reading, second by Russell. Clerk read.

Street department head, Bill Long, explained this is the annual paperwork to submitted to the state to participate in bids for salt at a cheaper rate.

LEFT ON 1ST READING.

ROUND TABLE Councilman Smith thanked Arlene for her years of service. He thanked everyone for coming in this evening.

Councilman Hays thanked Arlene for her “first class” job serving as clerk. He thanked all the city employees. “We have good people”. He shared that residents are happy. They like the new trash trucks. The trucks were a great investment.

Mr. Hays shared that he heard a comment that the none of the property, that Mr. Gross owns on Rt. 56 and is receiving an abatement, is in the city of London. The individual was upset that council granted the abatement.

Mayor Closser assured him that prior to the Bluebird facility being built, the property was annexed into the city as they wanted to take advantage of city utilities.

Councilman Peters thanked Arlene for her years of service and everyone for coming in this evening.

Councilwoman Russell thanked Arlene and wished her well with her retirement.

She informed that the next finance committee meeting is Monday, April 5th.

President Comer thanked Arlene for her awesome job and commented that he could always count on her. “Congratulations on your retirement!”

ADJOURN: Motion by Hays to adjourn.