

**REGULAR PIQUA CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

Piqua City Commission met at 6 p.m. in the Municipal Government Complex Commission Chambers located at 201 W. Water Street, Piqua, Ohio.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Pearson and Commissioners Hinds, Lee, Grissom, and Vetter were present.

REGULAR PIQUA CITY COMMISSION MEETING

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from the September 5, 2023, Regular City Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinds to approve the Consent Agenda and Commissioner Lee seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE NO. O-12-23 (1st Reading)

An ordinance declaring the improvement to certain parcels of real property to be a public purpose and exempt from taxation; establishing a Tax Increment Equivalent Fund and providing for the collection and deposit of service payments into that fund; specifying the public infrastructure improvements directly benefiting the property; and authorizing a Development Agreement with Ascend Wellness Holdings.

Introduction: Community & Economic Development Director Chris Schmiesing explained that this ordinance will establish a TIF tool to enable improvements to Recker Road, particularly to extend the water and sewer lines. The developer has asked for the TIF to help in financing the public infrastructure, which will support future development to the south of Recker Road. Ascend Wellness Holdings Public Affairs representative Matt McKenna explained that the developer needs access to the public utilities and that he already met with the local schools as a courtesy. Kip Wahlers of Ice Miller Legal Counsel said this would entail a 10-year TIF with a 75% exemption and would run until the cost of the public improvements have been reimbursed, which he anticipates would be approximately 7 years for \$300,000 total.

Commissioners Comments: Mayor Pearson wanted confirmation that the service payments would be set up to be paid directly to the Miami County Treasurer, to which Mr. Wahlers answered yes.

Public Comment: None

RESOLUTION NO. R-109-23

A resolution adopting the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan

Introduction: City Manager Paul Oberdorfer said that the City embarked on an update to the strategic plan this year to develop a current vision, mission, and core set of values to help guide future decisions. As an outcome of this process, there were 4 focused strategies established for the City: a unified community, responsive services, a thriving economy, and reliable infrastructure. He noted that this updated plan will tie into the 2024 budget process.

Commissioners Comments: Commissioner Grissom inquired if the documents for the strategic plan are available to the public online, to which Mr. Oberdorfer replied yes. It will be posted on the city's website page tomorrow.

Public Comment: Paige Stemen commented that everyone needs to speak into the microphone at the podium so that all can hear.

Natalie Young asked if there was a more detailed plan document available, as she feels that the one provided is not very detailed and there are not enough funds for the parks. Mr. Oberdorfer responded that the plan will be refined for the 2024 budget and that specific strategies will be developed in the future related to this plan.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lee to approve the resolution and Commissioner Grissom seconded the motion. Commissioner Vetter was not in favor of the resolution. Mayor Pearson, along with Commissioners Lee, Grissom, and Hinds were in favor and the motion was carried.

RESOLUTION NO. R-110-23

A resolution approving the tax rates for the City as determined by the Miami County Budget Commission

Introduction: Interim Finance Director Charlotte Colley explained that this is an annual request of approval of the certified tax rates that are used to levy property tax on all general duplicates for 2023 to be collected in 2024. These revenues are extremely important to the general fund and the day-to-day operations of the City and will be collected in 2024.

Commissioners Comments: None

Public Comment: None

A motion was made by Mayor Pearson to approve the resolution and Commissioner Hinds seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. R-111-23

A resolution approving an Investment Policy for the City of Piqua

Introduction: Mayor Pearson announced that this resolution needs to be postponed for now.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinds to postpone the resolution and Commissioner Grissom seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

A motion was then made by Commissioner Grissom to postpone the resolution until October 17, 2023, and Commissioner Vetter seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. R-112-23

A resolution creating a Capital Improvement fund for the Scott Drive Redevelopment Project for the City of Piqua

Introduction: Ms. Colley explained that due to approval of Ordinance #O-11-23 that created a debt service fund for the Bond Series 2023, now a capital improvement fund is needed to record the revenue from the note and to track the use of these funds.

Commissioners Comments: Commissioner Lee asked if this was just for this one fund, to which Ms. Colley replied yes, in order to capture the revenue from the Bond Series.

Public Comment: Jeff Grimes expressed concern over these funds coming from the schools. Mr. Oberdorfer said that this is just a funding line, and that the schools are not loaning monies to a private project on Scott Drive.

A motion was made by Mayor Pearson to approve the resolution and Commissioner Lee seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. R-113-23

A resolution creating a Capital Improvement fund for the Lock 9 Park Improvement Project for the City of Piqua

Introduction: Ms. Colley reiterated that this resolution, like the previous one, is because the City must create a fund to record the revenue and track the use of these funds related to the Lock 9 Park Improvement Project.

Commissioners Comments: Commissioner Hinds wanted to clarify that this new fund is to serve as a "checks and balances," to which Ms. Colley replied yes, it allows the City to track the monies.

Public Comment: None

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinds to approve the resolution and Commissioner Lee seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gary Koenig said he is pleased that the resolution for the new investment policy was postponed. He said it is a good idea to invest the surplus funds, but his concern is that the monies will all be deposited into the general fund. Gary believes that it would be better to use these funds to lower utility rates. Mr. Oberdorfer commented that these funds are required to be received into the general fund to follow State Auditor guidelines for accounting purposes. Reallocation of the funds would be discussed with the Commission, Utility Board and Energy Board.

Chuck Starrett does not understand how the City can take Utility and Power funds and use them elsewhere for other projects. He wants the funds to be used to lower utility rates for citizens. Mr. Oberdorfer responded that without economic incentives, economic development does not happen, as there are cities all over the country competing for new businesses.

Eva Silvers asked what the end goal is for the community in regard to the new strategic plan.

Roland Sourmail thinks that the City Manager does not know what is going on in Piqua since he has not lived here for a long period of time.

Natalie Young feels as though there are many contradictions in the strategic plan, particularly with the claims of high-quality life, natural beauty and outdoor amenities. She also does not think it is good for battery testing to be next to fresh water.

Jeff Lange expressed concerns with the battery testing at the old water plant on SR 66. He said that the Open Burn Permit obtained in 2018 from RAPCA was for firefighter training, not for Industrial open burning. He also questioned why ESRG has a 10-year lease with the City with an option for 20 years.

Scott Phillips said he is disgruntled with the open burning occurring near his residence on Piqua-Lockington Road, as he along with other neighbors, care for the Rocky Ridge Lake that provides 65% of the drinking water in Piqua.

Debbie Stein questioned what value ESRG and the battery burning provides to Piqua.

Diane Park expressed her disapproval for the non-standard battery testing occurring by ESRG. She is also concerned with the dog park being 566 feet away from the test site.

Pam Campbell relayed her concerns with the burning site, as she lives next door.

Tammy Nees said that there are times when she cannot go outside at her residence on Fessler-Buxton Road due to the fumes from the burn site.

Chuck Starrett said that fumes reach his residence on Demming Road depending on the wind.

Paige Stemen commented that her garden plants have chemical burns on them this year.

Jeff Lange asked the Commission to reconsider allowing burns at this site.

Brad Hampshire, who is a minority owner of a cabinetry business across the street from the burn site, expressed his concern for his employees. He said that the fumes and smell, along with big plumes of smoke, have gotten worse the past year. This has been disruptive to his business, as some employees have been sent home a few times due to complaints.

Jeff Grimes is concerned with the proximity of the burn site to the river and Swift Run Lake.

Tyler Fonzi stated that recycling batteries instead of burning them would avoid air and water pollution, along with preventing greenhouse gas emissions.

Dave Hitchings asked if the City receives a payment for each burn conducted. Mr. Oberdorfer responded that payment is received, which goes into a water department fund.

Scott Phillips believes that the water chemistry is changing due to the burning of batteries at this site.

Tom Hohman asked for clarification on if the correct permit was issued in 2018 and if the site is in an exclusion zone, which would be a violation. Mr. Oberdorfer said that there is a meeting there this Thursday, September 21, 2023, with the Ohio EPA and RAPCA, which will include a site inspection.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Oberdorfer provided several points of clarification in regard to a recent "Letter to the Editor" in the *Miami Valley Today* newspaper. He provided dollar figures related to the 3 phases of the Lock 9 Park Project. He explained that waiver of the 3-Reading Rule was necessary to remain on the critical path to get the work done at Lock 9 to receive grant funding. He also clarified that the City did not purchase the Crooked Handle property. He said that the City understands its involvement with the air and water quality of Piqua, citing that Power's Turbine #8 recently received a Certificate of Compliance with RAPCA and the Ohio EPA.

Mr. Oberdorfer then asked the owner of ESRG Nick Warner to present on the issue of battery burnings at the old water plant site. Mr. Warner gave an overview presentation on ESRG's testing operations. He assured everyone that his company is engaged with both the Ohio EPA and RAPCA, and that ESRG is pursuing an industrial permit if determined necessary at their meeting this coming Thursday. He stated that the battery burning is strictly for training and research purposes only, and that his company always disposes of batteries as environmentally safe as possible.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Commissioner Grissom announced his immediate resignation from the council. He is thankful for all the support in the past 4 years of service and is confident that the City is moving forward in a positive direction.

Commissioner Hinds expressed her appreciation for Commissioner Grissom, and she is excited for his new job opportunity. She also wished Commissioner Lee a happy birthday, and she assured Hampshire Cabinetry that the Commission was unaware of the negative impact of the burn site on their business.

Commissioner Lee thanked all the citizens who attended the meeting this evening and for speaking out. He said he understands their frustration. He commended Commissioner Grissom and his volunteerism. He also said that work is in progress to create a Rental Advocacy Committee and reiterated that he wants tenants, landlords, and property owners involved.

Commissioner Vetter acknowledged the positive impact of the new spay and neuter program of feral cats in Piqua and said he is an advocate for an upcoming first-time homebuyer project.

Mayor Pearson expressed her gratitude to Commissioner Grissom for his devotion and dedication to the City of Piqua. She announced that anyone interested in the position of Ward 4 Commissioner can apply online. She also thanked Lorna Swisher for her service at Mainstreet Piqua.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:29 p.m

A motion was made by Commissioner Lee to adjourn, and Commissioner Vetter seconded the motion. All approved and the motion was carried unanimously.

Cindy Pearson Mayor
CINDY PEARSON, MAYOR

Passed: 10.3.2023

Attest: Melissa Kinney

MELISSA KINNEY

COMMISSION CLERK