

**MINUTES
PIQUA CITY COMMISSION
Tuesday, July 15, 2014
7:30 P.M.**

Piqua City Commission met at 7:30 P.M. in the Municipal Government Complex Commission Chambers located at 201 W. Water Street. Mayor Fess called the meeting to order. Also present were Commissioners Martin, Terry, Wilson, and Vogt. Absent: None.

REGULAR CITY COMMISSION MEETING

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the minutes from the July 1, 2014 Regular Piqua City Commission Meeting.

Moved by Commissioner Martin, seconded by Commissioner Vogt, to approve the Consent Agenda. Voice vote: Aye: Fess, Martin, Terry, Vogt, and Wilson. Nay: None. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION: FRIENDS OF PIQUA PARKS

Ruth Koon and Glen Devers, members of the Friends of the Piqua Parks came forward and provided a brief update on the plans to place a statue of Community Hero William H. Pitsenbarger in the community. Mr. Devers provided the history on U.S. Air Force Pararescueman and medical specialist William H. Pitsenbarger. Mr. Pitsenbarger was posthumously award the Air Force Cross in 1966. In 1993 Pitsenbarger's fellow graduating Piqua Central classmates and the Piqua Chamber of Commerce asked the City to rename the 65 acre Eisenhower Park, "Pitsenbarger Sports Complex". Ms. Koon stated the estimated cost of the statue is budgeted at \$90,000 which includes a concrete pad, a five-foot high granite pedestal, and the statue of Mr. Pitsenbarger. A generous donor has already contributed \$30,000 to the project, leaving \$60,000 to raise. For further information or to make a donation contact the Friends of the Piqua Parks or the City Manager's Office at 937-778-8300, stated Ms. Koon.

Mayor Fess thanked the Friends of Piqua Parks for spearheading such a worthy project, and encouraged residents to help support this project.

NEW BUSINESS

RES. NO. R-83-14 (Public Hearing)

A Resolution accepting for statutory purposes a budget for the calendar year 2015

Cynthia Holtzapple, Finance Director/Assistant City Manager provided the staff report. Ms. Holtzapple stated the City if required to file an approved Resolution and County Tax Budget with the Miami County Budget Commission on or before July 20, 2014. The Resolution must be approved by the City Commission with advertising and a public hearing conducted before submitting to Miami County. The 2015 County Tax Budget was prepared based upon information obtained from the individual City Departments and City Administration, stated Ms. Holtzapple.

The total 2015 tax budget is projected to be \$129.2 million; an increase of \$48.3 million, or 59.7% more than the latest 2014 estimates due to several major projects in the Enterprise Funds. The major reasons for the net \$48.3 million increase are: General Fund a \$0.2 million increase; Special Revenue Funds, a total of \$2.9 million increase; and Debt Service Funds of \$22, 0 million increase for the new Water Plant Construction Debt Service; and Enterprise Funds of \$23.2 million increase for a total of \$48.3 million increase, stated Ms. Holtzapple.

Commissioner Terry asked when they plan to break ground for the new Water Treatment Plant. City Manager Huff stated possibly this year. Commissioner Terry stated she had spoken with a former Water Plant employee who stated there is a very large rock in front of the current water plant, and would like to see the rock moved to the new plant if possible.

Public Comment

No one came forward to speak for or against Resolution No. R- 83-14.

Moved by Commissioner Vogt, seconded by Commissioner Terry, that Resolution No. R-83-14 be adopted. Roll call vote, Aye: Wilson, Vogt, Martin, Fess, and Terry. Nay: None. Motion carried unanimously. Mayor Fess then declared Resolution No. R-83-14 adopted.

RES. NO. R-84-14

A Resolution awarding a contract to Wall Bros. Asphalt Co., Inc. for the 2014 Street resurfacing program

Amy Havenar, City Engineer, provided the staff report. Ms. Havenar stated on July 1, 2014 two bids were received for the 2014 Street Resurfacing Program. Over 3 ½ miles of streets will be paved and ADA ramps will be installed where required, stated Ms. Havenar. An Alternate Bid was also accepted which will allow the Power Systems to complete the repaving of Statler Avenue which was damaged during the installation of storm sewer as a part of the Power System improvement project.

City Manager Huff stated they have increased paving by half a million for additional areas and are still looking at the areas and will come back to commission for additional funding. There are a lot of streets in need of repaving right now.

The resurfacing project will consist of the necessary roadway base repairs and the profile milling and overlaying of the roadway with a new asphalt surface, and will include placement of all new pavement markings within the project limits, stated Mr. Huff.

Several questions were raised concerning the depth of the milling, possible starting date for project, and if they are aware of any issues at this time. City Manager Huff and Ms. Havenar provided information.

Questions were raised concerning the paving project on N. Downing Street. City Manager Huff explained the reason for the lengthy time schedule, and provided additional information regarding the project.

Commissioner Vogt inquired about the steel plate on N. Main Street by the bridge. Ms. Havenar explained the steel plates have been placed by the Power Plant as they will be working in the roadway, and further explained the work they would be doing.

Public Comment

No one came forward to speak for or against Resolution No. R-84-14.

Moved by Commissioner Terry, seconded by Commissioner Vogt, that Resolution No. R-84-14 be adopted. Roll call, Aye: Wilson, Vogt, Martin, Fess, and Terry. Nay: None. Motion carried unanimously. Mayor Fess then declared Resolution No. R-84-14 adopted.

RES. NO. R-80-14

A Resolution submitting to the electors of the City of Piqua, Ohio, a proposed amendment to Codified Ordinance Section 36.03, 36.04, and 36.13 providing an increase of 0.25 of 1% Municipal Income Tax Levy beginning on January 1, 2015

City Manager Huff stated over the past few years, the City of Piqua has experienced a reduction of funding from the State of Ohio. These reductions have been very extensive amounting to almost \$2 M annually.

To make up for the lost general fund revenues, vacant positions remained unfilled, equipment replacement and purchases were delayed, and programs curtailed, stated City Manager Huff.

In 2012 a Public Safety Income Tax Levy was placed on the ballot to increase public safety spending by a quarter percent but the levy failed. At the end of 2012 the City was awarded a SAFER grant which allowed the city to hire 6 additional firefighters to bring the fire staffing up to 31. The grant was for only a 2-year term and could only be used for salaries and benefits of those 6 firefighters, and the SAFER grant will expire in March of 2015, stated City Manager Huff.

In 2013 the Fire Department saw an increase of 20% in emergency call going from 3,255 in 2012 to 4,044.

The purpose of proposing the quarter percent for the Police and Fire Departments is to maintain the existing 6 firefighter positions and to hire an additional 5 police officers. During the SAFER grant period the Fire Department was able to respond to emergencies with the minimal staffing and grew to 98% of the time versus the previous 60% which allowed them to do internal structure fire searches for possible victims, stated City Manager Huff.

The Police Department was staffed at 35 officers in 2003 and currently has only 30 sworn officers today.

Piqua has the highest number of property crimes in the nation compared to other cities similar in size, and continues to see an increase in heroin use and other drugs which fuels additional crime, stated City Manager Huff.

The only way to combat these issues of crime and maintain a safe community is through putting "Boots on the Ground" to do preventive and predictive crime enforcement. The City must reduce crime in order to attract new residents, workers, and businesses.

The increase in the Public Safety Levy would also allow the City to fund both capital and operation equipment for the departments in the future, said City Manager Huff.

Commissioner voiced concern, and asked several questions regarding the staffing and the need for retaining and adding additional personnel in the safety services, when the SAFER grant ends, what happen to those 6 firefighters hired with the SAFER grant money, and what will happen if the Levy fails. City Manager Huff provided information and answered all questions.

Public Comment

Bob Bloom, President of the Piqua Firefighters Union, came forward and provided additional information on the need for the quarter percent levy at this time.

Mr. Bloom stated the general fund provides a majority of the funding for safety services. Governor Kasich eliminated the inheritance tax and local government funds that used to be returned to local Governments, and took a large portion of the general fund revenues. The SAFER Grant provided 6 firefighter/paramedics to bring the current staff to 10 per shift. These 6 positions will be lost in March of 2015. We need to act now to insure that we do not lose these positions, and the added safety they provide, stated Mr. Bloom.

According to a survey by the International City/County Managers Association the Piqua Fire Department is the 8th busiest emergency medical service provider per capita in the country, and provides fire and emergency medical service for \$150.00 per resident which is the 10th lowest in the country, stated Mr. Bloom.

Mr. Bloom said no one likes to pay additional taxes, but the cuts made by the state has made this necessary, and encouraged residents to support the tax levy.

Commissioner Wilson stated the citizens need to be informed of the levy and the effect it will have on the safety services if it is not passed.

Mayor Fess stated the citizens of Piqua have always supported the safety services and she hopes they will continue to do so this time.

Russ Fashner, Forest Avenue, came forward and provided additional information and his support for the levy.

Mayor Fess thanked Mr. Fashner for his input and support of the levy.

Moved by Commissioner Terry, seconded by Commissioner Vogt, that Resolution No. R-85-14 be adopted. Roll call vote, Aye: Vogt, Martin, Fess, Terry, and Wilson. Nay: None. Motion carried unanimously. Mayor Fess then declared Resolution No. R-85-14 adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ralph Pritchard, Fourth Street, came forward and expressed concern about the number of Potholes there are on his street, and the paving he would like to see done on Fourth Street.

City Manager Huff stated they are looking at the area to see what it needs.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Huff stated he did not have any additional information to report at this time.

MONTHLY REPORTS MAY 2014

Mayor Fess stated the Monthly Reports for May 2014 are accepted.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Commissioner Vogt encouraged citizens to get behind and support the Friends of the Park's efforts to raise the funds to place a statue of William H. Pitsenbarger in the downtown area.

Commissioner Vogt thanked the EMS Department for taking such good care of the Piqua residents. We need to keep the staffing to continue the excellent service we have been receiving and encouraged citizens to vote for the Safety Services Levy.

Commissioner Martin also voiced his support of the safety services levy, further stating the Police Department needs to show more presence to curb some of the incidents. Having the 6 additional firefighters have also made a difference in the Fire Department, stated Commissioner Martin.

Commissioner Terry stated she feels the Safety Services levy is a good way to spend tax dollars, and is in support of putting it on the ballot.

Commissioner Wilson stated he is support of the Safety Services Levy, but has concerns over the budget.

Moved by Mayor Fess, seconded by Commissioner Vogt, to adjourn from the Regular City Commission Meeting at 8:30 P.M and adjourn into Executive Session, to consider the purchase or sale of property for public purposes. Roll call, Aye: Fess, Vogt, Martin, Terry, and Wilson. Nay, None. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Commissioner Terry, seconded by Commissioner Martin, to adjourn from the Executive Session at 8:48 P.M. Voice vote, Aye: Fess, Vogt, Martin, Terry, and Wilson. Nay, None. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Commissioner Martin, seconded by Commissioner Vogt, to adjourn from the Regular City Commission Meeting at 8:49 P.M. Voice vote, Aye: Fess, Vogt, Martin, Terry, and Wilson. Nay, None. Motion carried unanimously.

LUCINDA L. FESS, MAYOR

PASSED: _____

ATTEST: _____
REBECCA J. COOL
CLERK OF COMMISSION