

MINUTES
PIQUA CITY COMMISSION
Tuesday, June 2, 2020
6:00 p.m.

Piqua City Commission met at 6:00 P.M. in the Municipal Government Complex Commission Chambers located at 201 W. Water Street. Mayor Lee called the meeting to order.

Roll Call as follows: Present: Mayor Lee, Commissioner Hinds, Commissioner Grissom, Commissioner Pearson and Commissioner Fogt.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from the May 19, 2020 Regular Piqua City Commission Meeting

Commissioner Pearson moved for the approval of the Consent Agenda; motion was seconded by Commissioner Grissom. Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was carried unanimously, and Mayor Lee declared the **Consent Agenda approved**

NEW BUSINESS

RES. NO. R-85-20

A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Grant Agreement with the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for Improvements to the Piqua Water Supply Lakes System

Don Freisthler, Water Superintendent presented the Staff Report.

City Manager Huff commented that the ramifications of not going forward with this is the fact that if we are not able to reduce the classification of the dam then we could be subject to having to make improvements such as widening and lengthening the dam at a cost of millions of dollars.

Mayor Lee asked for any questions or comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Grissom asked for confirmation that this is Swift Run dam.

Mr. Freisthler stated that dam to be the location at this time, however, the work with the consultant has involved the entire 2.2 miles of levee in all three lakes in the hydraulic system.

Motion was made by Commissioner Hinds to adopt RES. NO. R-85-20, motion seconded by Commissioner Fogt. Motion was carried unanimously. Mayor Lee declared RES. NO. R-85-20 adopted.

RES. NO. R-86-20

A Resolution fixing the time and place for a Public Hearing on the proposed City Tax Budget for Miami County for the calendar year 2021 and Draft Appropriation Ordinance

Cynthia Holtzapple, Finance Director presented the Staff Report.

Mayor Lee asked for any questions or comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Grissom confirmed that this was the time of the regular commission meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fogt to adopt RES. NO. R-86-20, motion seconded by Commissioner Grissom. Motion was carried unanimously. Mayor Lee declared RES. NO. R-86-20 adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Lee explained the process being followed at this time. We have received four questions/comments

Jamie Smith, 511 New Street – I would like to address the City of Piqua utilities for over charging on bills. I was charged a whole month of base pay for 1 week of moving into my house and when I called to get an explanation of it, I am told "that's the way it is" it's not right and several people have experienced this. I have the bill with no reading but charges for a month from May 1-May 7. This is not right. Please help me on this as I have not paid this yet and don't feel I should. I should pay for what I used for a week.

Cynthia Holtzapple responded with the explanation of the procedure for assessing base fees, and noted that these fees help cover all fixed costs and are not pro-rated and are charged to all customers.

Mayor Lee expressed appreciation for the response that was not "That's just the way it is." And stated that he was sorry that Ms. Smith was displeased with the process and if she still had a dispute to please discuss the matter with the City Manager.

Alysha Richardson, 630 Manier Avenue – I would like to know what it will take to get our City of Piqua to declare racism. Public Health Crisis? What are the steps we need to take to get this rolling? I see the state is in the discussion of doing it but change starts AT HOME!

City Manager Huff stated that the state and Franklin County are looking at declaring racism as a public health crisis. No details are known because it has not been adopted, but we will forward the information when it has been made known.

Mayor Lee confirmed that our health department will look into this as well and expressed that he would be in favor of this and would like to learn more about it.

Commissioner Hinds stated that she feels that racism in general is something we need to look at with regard to what is going on nationally and locally. Commission needs to be proactive.

Commissioner Grissom requested to be kept updated with regard to the racism issue and how Piqua could possibly lead the way.

Mayor Lee commented on the weekend protest being very peaceful and that we are awaiting information.

Jeffery Cost, 311 Manning Street – I'm getting sick and tired of the trucks using the engine brake coming off Ash Street bridge, why is there a sign on Covington Avenue coming down the hill if there's one there why can't we get one coming off Ash Street bridge and I'm getting sick and tired of the people at 223 Manning Street they have a loud racing car and they sit out back at their garage and just keep revving it up it's getting old and we have called the cops and I'm about to move out of the city if something isn't done about it.

Mayor Lee commented that he has forwarded to the city several of Mr. Cost's complaints and inquired as to signage on Covington Avenue.

City Manager Huff replied that there should be a sign but with all the construction it could have been removed. Mr. Huff will check and replace the sign if it has been removed. As far as the loud noise complaints, you have to call the police.

Mayor Lee stated that the police officers have to sit and listen to it (the noise) themselves in order to act on it. Law of averages says they are going to get caught in some point in time.

Jey Roman, 406 W. High Street – Hello everyone, I would like to say thank you to Mayor Lee for his leadership at the protest last weekend. I'm so proud he is our mayor and while others watched from a bench far away, he was in the middle of it with us. Thank you also to the Piqua PD for supporting the cause and being a shining example as always. Finally, I think it's time these meetings reopen to the public in some form. Now is not the time for further separation of government and citizens, we have to come together immediately.

Mayor Lee expressed a thank you for the compliment and stated he was happy with regard to the police interaction. We are still limited by the Governor with regard to being able to hold public meetings. When the restriction is lifted the public meetings will resume and we look forward to citizen participation. Mayor Lee inquired of City Manager Huff if he was aware of any timeline for reopening the meetings.

City Manager Huff replied that there was no mention yet from the Governor, that meetings were still limited to ten people of which that amount were present at tonight's meeting.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT – ANNOUNCEMENTS

Main and High traffic calming project to have been started tonight at 6:00 p.m. He will check on the project progress when he leaves tonight's meeting. Hoping the traffic should be open in the morning.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

COMMISSIONER HINDS

Thank you to Mayor Lee for his leadership over the past weekend and the experiences he "brings to the table" not only as a retired police officer but as an African American. Commissioner Hinds then recited a quote from Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II which she feels speaks to what is going on at the present time.

Thank you for the peaceful demonstration – black lives matter -and commendation to those who organized the demonstration and thank you for leading the way for the community.

For those of us that are white this is the time to sit back and really listen – we have been talking way too long. It is time to try to understand the pain and what our African American brothers and sisters are and have gone through.

COMMISSIONER GRISSOM

Fourth of July – torn over the issue with regard of all that is going on. Citizen survey shows there is an overwhelming response from the citizens in favor of holding an event. Have we received any response from the Governor with regard to these types of events?

City Manager Huff responded that currently festivals are not permitted. Mass gatherings are not permitted at this point.

Mayor Lee inquired if there was any way we could contact the Governor with regard to this issue.

City Manager Huff stated that he was sure that others had contacted the Governor but by all means Mayor Lee was welcome to contact him.

Mayor Lee would like to see something go on that could be socially distanced but the time is getting short as far organization.

City Manager Huff responded that one alternative is to reschedule the fireworks to Labor Day.

Commissioner Grissom asked if the orders were pretty specific. Could a segregated event, possibly with the citizens watching from vehicles, be held?

City Manager Huff replied that the orders are specific. Event information is being released but until it is actually released the City is bound by the current orders. The time has passed as far as planning an event, but waiting to see about some type of firework event. Bottom line – too far into this timewise and would be best to reschedule an event for another time.

Commissioner Grissom inquired if we could try to plan an event that would be more at the vendors' loss if the event would be cancelled last minute.

City Manager Huff explained that it is required that the City guarantee the vendors' payments ahead of time. We do not want to commit the city financially as it is very likely the city would not be able to recover the deposit funds. Holding out for fireworks.

Commissioner Grissom commented on the postponement of the event to support local businesses.

Commissioner Fogt inquired as to the "drop dead date" as far as getting the fireworks up and running.

City Manager Huff stated we would need to work with the fireworks company

Commissioner Pearson commented on the number of concessions at the Farmer's Market.

City Manager Huff stated that farmer's markets are specifically allowed. Distancing still a requirement. It is confusing and we are trying to deal with it.

COMMISSIONER PEARSON

Inquiries with regard to if the parks are open. Parks are open but the playgrounds remain closed.

City Manager Huff stated that parks were never closed but playground equipment was and is still closed. Playground equipment is one of the things specifically identified as remaining closed. The city has signs up that state the parks are closed and that is about all we can do. We taped at one time but that quickly disappears.

Mayor Lee commented that kids are still hopping on the equipment and removing the tape.

Commissioner Grissom inquired if the skate park was considered a park and is it open.

City Manager Huff stated that signs are up at the skate park stating that it is closed.

Commissioner Hinds stated that it is hard for children to see other children playing on the playground. Up to everyone to monitor and enforce the closure.

City Manager Huff stated that the City has to follow orders with regard to the closure orders.

Dead looking plants growing/not growing on the Rt. 36 slopes. These plants are not dead. They grow up from the bottom. City Manager Huff stated that this was a project by the Friends of the Piqua Parks, completely paid for and maintained by that organization.

CSX Transportation railroad crossing work at Statler Road and No. Co. Rd 25 A from June 8-14 closure of roads. Allow closure of one crossing at a time, then the other crossing at Garbry will be closed for a period of time.

COMMISSIONER FOGT

Medical Marijuana - Time and date scheduled for the medical marijuana meeting – via zoom, June 17th at 6:00 p.m. if everyone is available.

Urban chickens – looking to align discussion time on everyone's schedules sometime in July.

Green Areas and Parks in the city – clean up and landscaping of the Shawnee green area property.

Local business questioning the utility base rates and businesses unable to open up due to current Covid guidelines. How can we support our locally established businesses at the time. Would like to come up with a plan in the near future to help these businesses.

Mayor Lee stated that it is important to get these businesses here and keep them here and see what we can come up with to support these businesses.

Water issues in the alley ways with regard to refuse trucks using them. Alleys not built for these type of vehicles that are causing damages. How much money is spent on alley work due to trucks using the alleys? Possible change to the city to move trash collection to the main roads vs. alleys when the change is made to the larger trash trucks that are automated.

Mayor Lee inquired if it is part of the plan to move the trash collection out of the alleys when that change is made to the new trash trucks.

City Manager Huff replied that some of those automated trucks may not fit down alleys and it is worth consideration of discussion

Mayor Lee stated we do need to look at the cost effectiveness of moving the trash pickup from the alleys to the streets.

MAYOR LEE

Thank you to everyone who participated in the walk on Sunday. His bi-racial children participated in the event and were proud to be a part of the demonstration. City needs to come together. Larry Hamilton has been talking about this issue for years. Acceptance of all people in the community. Police officers need to be held accountable for their actions. All lives matter, but you can't say all until you include black lives. All races included.

Disruption of demonstration by people passing by yelling Trump 2020 and yelling names of some of the people that were there. Troy demonstration and positive actions of police officers.

Piqua police interaction with citizens participating in the walk. Very proud to have been a part of the Piqua Police Department. Great chief and fine officers.

Mayor Lee stated that he feels he got to be a good example to his children at the event.

Plaza Review Committee –Is the Commission interested in appointing a representative from each ward to that committee to have a say as to what restaurant goes into the premises so there should be no complaints with regard to what restaurant will operate in that facility.

Commissioner Grissom inquired as to if Mayor Lee was asking only with regard to the restaurant selection for the plaza to which Mayor Lee confirmed – just the plaza review committee

City Manager Huff clarified that that Plaza Review Committee only recommends to the City Commission, who in turn makes the final decision.

Commissioner Hinds asked for an explanation of the responsibilities of the review committee, not just reviewing the restaurants and stated there are already citizens on the board.

City Manager Huff stated the committee was formed in 2008 - required to be set up as part of the overall plaza restoration project because the ownership did not come into the city until 2014. Prior to that owned by a conglomerate and investors and that was one of the requirements. Committee maintained after that to continue looking at the banquet center, how it operates, approval of the caterers, policies for rental costs, etc., all the set up administratively, all recommendations made are part of review any restaurants, and applications.

Commissioner Grissom –would like to hear the recommendations so we know everyone has had some input

Commissioner Pearson – questioned how often the committee meets

City Manager Huff – only when necessary

Mayor Lee – how many prospects interested in restaurant?

City Manager Huff – about 8. About 40 requests for proposals have been sent out. Proposals supposed to be back by June 15th. Proposals to be reviewed by the committee

Mayor Lee asked if the commission was ok with this that we would get one person's name per ward to Gary within a week from today

Commissioner Hinds inquired about the relationship between the Plaza and the library?

City Manager Huff replied there is not really a relationship as the Library is different type of lease.

Commissioner Grissom inquired as to how many people are on the committee now?

City Manager Huff replied there are 5 and two exofficio. Dan French, Fred Enderle, Kazy Hinds, Gary Huff, Chris Schmiesing, Cindy Holtzapple, who represents finance – ex officio and Brittany Van Horn, banquet center operation as ex officio

Commission Grissom asked for clarification if the original two would stay on and there would be additional members added.

Commissioner Hinds state that Dan French and Fred Enderle have a huge ownership and history of the connection.

Commissioner Pearson asked if the deli was separate.


City Manager Huff stated that proposals could be submitted for both or either.

Mayor Lee requested submission of names by next Tuesday to be able inform them when the next meeting will happen

Mayor Lee stated to be safe, that he cares about the city and so does everyone sitting in the room. We all are here for you, at some point we will get back to regular meetings, face to face, until then, please keep submitting questions and please keep in contact, we are here to work on your behalf.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Commissioner Pearson to adjourn from the Regular City Commission Meeting at 6:50 p.m. motion seconded by Commissioner Fogt, motion carried unanimously.


KRIS LEE, MAYOR

PASSED: 6/16/20

ATTEST: Karen S. Jenkins
KAREN S. JENKINS
CLERK OF COMMISSION