



Council Chambers

August 28, 2018

A) CALL TO ORDER

The Council for the City of Norwood met in regular session on the above date with Mrs. Donna Laake presiding. The meeting opened with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

B) PRAYER

C) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

D) ROLL CALL

On roll call, the following members answered present: Mr. Bonsall, Mr. Clark, Ms. Stevenson, Mrs. Hanrahan, Mr. Sanker, and Mr. Breadon; Mr. Thompson was absent.

Mrs. Laake requested everyone remain standing for a moment of silence to acknowledge the passing of Senator John McCain, US Senator from Arizona, and Ginnie Wallace, a regular attendee of Norwood City Council meetings.

E) AMENDMENT OF AGENDA

Mrs. Laake confirmed that she had reached out to Ms. Hill, Secretary to the Clerk of Council, to revise the original agenda to add the swearing in of Norwood Police officers, the request for Executive Session, and the letter regarding the CVS liquor license.

On a motion by Mr. Breadon, seconded by Mrs. Hanrahan, it was moved to amend the agenda as follows: flip the order of the communications, so that the request for Executive Session is the last communication; add a Committee of the Whole report; add an Administration Report by Mayor Williams regarding 911. All members present voted, "Yes."

F) MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

On a motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Ms. Stevenson, it was moved to accept the minutes of the August 14, 2018 meeting, as if read. All present voted, "Yes".

G) SWEARING IN OF NORWOOD POLICE OFFICERS

Chief Kramer and Captain Bellman stood before Council and introduced the six new Norwood Police Officers. Chief Kramer thanked Council for the opportunity for this to take place at the meeting and he thanked the families of the new officers who were in attendance at the meeting. Chief Kramer stated these six new officers are some of the good things taking place in the city of Norwood; he also invited Council to attend the reception taking place following the meeting. Chief Kramer then introduced each of the new officers:

- Jimmy Holdren – retired as a lieutenant from the Cincinnati Fire Department and also served 8 years as a tanker for the Army
- Ryan Ramos – worked as a police officer with the village of Fairfax
- Kendall Jent – is a life-time Norwood resident who is beginning his first position in law enforcement
- Carlos Cortez – is a certified police officer and spent time working in Owensville
- Jeff Stamm – worked as a police officer with the village of Fairfax
- Margaret Caskey – worked in Corrections with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

Mrs. Laake asked about the assigned training officer; Chief Kramer shared names of the assigned training officer for each of the newly hired officers. Mayor Williams stepped forward to swear in all of the new officers; the six officers were then congratulated and welcomed by each member of Council. Mrs. Laake expressed her appreciation to Chief Kramer for this event taking place at a Council meeting for all to see.

H) REQUEST TO ADDRESS COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were no requests to address Council on agenda items.

I) REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

- 1) **Committee of the Whole: 8/28/18** **Re: TREX Liquor License Transfer to Fueled Collective**
Mr. Bonsall stated this is an exciting thing for Fueled Collective with their additional location. Mr. Bonsall also stated that no other liquor license owner came forward with regard to trying to sell their liquor license; he believes it is a good thing to allow Fueled Collective the liquor license for their expansion. Ms. Stevenson stated these are two different leases for the same company at Rookwood. Mrs. Laake stated Fueled Collective is waiting on the expansion license results from the State of Ohio Department of Liquor Control.

On a motion by Mr. Bonsall, seconded by Mr. Breadon, it was moved to accept the committee report and to approve the signing of the TREX liquor license transfer to Fueled Collective. All present voted, "Yes."

J) SECOND/THIRD READING OF ORDINANCES

There were no second or third readings of ordinances.

K) INTRODUCTORY READINGS OF ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS

There were no introductory readings of ordinances or resolutions.

L) ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Mayor Thomas Williams

Re: 911 Report

Mayor Williams addressed Council as a follow-up to previous discussions regarding the 911 communication center; he had asked Chief Kramer and Lt. Rankin to conduct an investigation. Mayor Williams stated the numbers coming from the Chief and Lieutenant will speak for themselves; there are other technical issues that will come into play with regard to this topic. Chief Kramer talked with other departments in Hamilton County; Lt. Rankin handled most of the technical questions surrounding equipment and software. Mayor Williams stated Andy Knapp, Director of Hamilton County 911, Police, Fire, EMS Dispatching Center and Hamilton County Telecommunications Division, is someone who is always straight forward; he will be a resource for cost savings training. Mayor Williams also stated Cincinnati Bell is exiting the 911 business by the end of the year and Norwood is obligated to find another carrier for our 911 system. Mayor Williams used an example involving fireworks and someone having a heart attack to describe the technological improvements of the new 911 software system; the new system will also allow text messages to be sent to 911.

Lt. Rankin stated costs were broken down to make the transfer to Hamilton County; a sheet was distributed to members of Council based off of a call volume of 25,000 (15,000 police calls and 10,000 fire / EMS calls for service). A copy of the sheet is on file in the Clerk of Council's office. According to Lt. Rankin, switching Norwood's 911 services to Hamilton County will require around \$150,000 in salaries for part-time clerical work (three full-time clerks will still be needed in addition to the six part-time clerks). If switching to Hamilton County for 911 services, Norwood receives around \$60,000 - \$80,000 in the 911 fund; currently there is around \$70,000 in the 911 fund which isn't always used annually. The Agile Network, which is \$1,240 per month, still has to be paid if services are switched over to Hamilton County. Mr. Bonsall asked about \$70,000 being reflected as a cost, as opposed to a loss in revenue; Lt. Rankin replied by stating the sheet reflects a cost difference, not necessarily a cost to the city. Lt. Rankin also stated he is not sure how much that amount will increase or how much Norwood will receive, but by switching to Hamilton County, Norwood will then get those funds for answering our 911 calls. Lt. Rankin also stated there will be two slight increases per call in the future; the current rate for Hamilton County is \$15.00 per call to 911. Lt. Rankin also noted that these increases (representing an increase of \$30,000 and \$60,000 annually) are not included in the total operating expense totals. Mayor Williams stated the numbers have been provided to the state auditors; they are in the process of reviewing the information. Ms. Stevenson asked about the Auditor's ability to break out the report similarly to that of Hamilton County; Lt. Rankin replied by stating this represented total expenditures for everything under 911/dispatch. Ms. Stevenson stated it is her belief that the effort to simplify the data is inflating some of the numbers. Lt. Rankin identified specific rows and columns on the sheet that were subsequently referenced at the bottom of the sheet.

Mrs. Laake asked about costs surrounding the change from Cincinnati Bell to a different carrier; Lt. Rankin responded by stating the difference is about \$20,000 per year for a maintenance program. There is an initial fee to purchase equipment and then an annual maintenance fee. The new mapping software is a more superior system and will allow for the ability to text to 911; the mapping software will cost around \$3,000 each year for seven years, until the equipment is purchased. Lt. Rankin stated there are enough funds in 911 to cover all of the costs. With regard to overall costs, this is virtually considered an even exchange. The \$20,000 in maintenance costs will be cut in half after seven years, which is when we will own the equipment. Lt. Rankin stated this will not be an easy transition; Cincinnati Bell has explained Norwood will "pay dearly" for keeping the service beyond the stated deadline.

Mrs. Laake asked about another community wanting to purchase or rent Norwood's 911 system; Chief Kramer replied by stating another municipality had expressed interest in purchasing Norwood's PSAP system if the decision is made that Norwood will go with Hamilton County's 911 services. Chief Kramer also stated no one is unhappy with Hamilton County's services or quality; the costs are an issue that becomes difficult to budget each year.

Mayor Williams stated Ms. Davis, with the state auditors, is working on the numbers that were turned over to her; the state auditors will have to go to the Financial Planning Commission with the information and make a recommendation. Mayor Williams stated this took so long to report out because numbers were

changing; the most important part is that both Chief Kramer's and Lt. Rankin's findings are in agreement and their numbers match. Mayor Williams stated he will talk with state auditors and proceed from there.

Mr. Sanker asked about the transition timeframe; Lt. Rankin stated January 31, 2019 is the last day of service with Cincinnati Bell. Based on the necessary logistics to make this transition happen, the city is already behind schedule. Lt. Rankin stated other agencies know the importance of controlling costs, which is why there are others interested in purchasing Norwood's PSAP system. Lt. Rankin stated Norwood citizens have been accustomed to receiving a level of treatment that has made a name for Norwood; this would not be the same level if switched over to Hamilton County. Mayor Williams stated he will do everything he can to keep Norwood's 911 service. If this impacts the Financial Recovery Plan, the Financial Supervisor will conduct a review, and a special Council meeting may be necessary. Mayor Williams stated the support of Council is vital. Mrs. Laake stated maintaining our own 911 system requires the purchase of new equipment is incurring new debt, which has to be approved by the Financial Planning and Supervision Commission. Mr. Moore stated that staying with what we have will require contracts with the new provider, which will have to be approved by Council; going with Hamilton County would also require contracts being approved by Council. Mr. Moore asked for confirmation that going with Hamilton County would require the Financial Planning and Supervision Commission to approve the increase of \$133,000 in costs for 911; Mrs. Laake stated that was also her understanding of the process. Mrs. Laake asked about an ordinance for the new contract one way or another; Mr. Moore replied by confirming an ordinance would be needed to enter into a contract for new equipment, the new provider, or new software. An ordinance is not needed to say "we are keeping our 911 system."

Lt. Rankin stated costs with the county will go up next year; they don't know how much. Chief Kramer stated he attended a Hamilton County Commissioner meeting, and it was stated the rate/cost per call to 911 will increase, regardless of the Hamilton County sales tax increase. Ms. Stevenson stated the presentations she has received paint a different picture each time; she would like to meet with Chief Kramer or Lt. Rankin to discuss further. Lt. Rankin stated he did not want to undercut the numbers; Chief Kramer agreed to go with the minimum numbers to identify the minimum cost difference. Lt. Rankin also stated he can't tell what the call volume would be if the 911 service was switched to Hamilton County; the estimates were based on minimum call numbers. Ms. Stevenson stated her concern is less about the numbers and more about the actual improvements to equipment versus service; she also asked what Norwood gets when we control 911 services. Lt. Rankin replied by stating there are some things that can be done to make more cuts for the 911 center, and provide for more savings; equipment changes have always been the same. The system that was selected is better and drastically cheaper than going with Hamilton County. Lt. Rankin stated the first estimates were his perception of the higher end costs, versus the bare minimum costs.

Mayor Williams stated he is respectfully asking for a motion by Council to support Norwood's 911 services, so that it can be reported to, and discussed with, the Financial Planning and Supervision Commission. Mr. Bonsall stated he agrees with Council taking action today so they can move forward. Mr. Bonsall stated \$779,000 of the \$853,000 was personnel costs; he had a question regarding the \$70,000 debt service that appeared in the budget from the previous year. Lt. Rankin replied by stating the debt service is for the MARCS system. Mr. Bonsall stated the primary expense for Norwood's 911 service is personnel; he still has several questions regarding the numbers, but believes it makes more sense to support Norwood's 911 services. Mr. Sanker stated once a city relinquishes their 911 service, it is almost impossible to ever get it back; there are others out there who know this and are interested in purchasing our system. Mr. Clark thanked Chief Kramer, Lt. Rankin, and Mayor Williams for working on this and sharing information; Mr. Clark stated the level of Norwood's 911 service is too invaluable to get rid of, and it makes sense to keep it. Mrs. Hanrahan stated she also agrees with keeping Norwood's 911 service; this allows Council to keep Norwood independent and to continue to provide an incredible level of service. Ms. Stevenson stated she appreciates the efforts to provide Council with information; she will abstain from voting on this matter and would like to meet to discuss further with Lt. Rankin or Chief Kramer.

On a motion by Mr. Sanker, seconded by Mrs. Hanrahan, it was moved to express Council's desire to keep Norwood's 911 services in-house. Ms. Stevenson abstained; all others present voted, "Yes."

Chief Kramer requested that Ms. Stevenson contact him via telephone to meet. Lt. Rankin stated his door is always open to any member of Council who wants to tour the 911 dispatch center.

M) OTHER REQUESTS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

Amy Wolfenbarger

Re: Sensible Norwood Follow Up

Ms. Wolfenbarger, of Carthage Avenue, addressed Council as a follow-up to her previous discussion on the Sensible Norwood ballot initiative; the Hamilton County Board of Elections did provide final confirmation that the issue will appear on the ballot in November. Ms. Wolfenbarger stated she reached out and spoke with Chief Kramer. She also spoke about citizen initiatives in general, and how it is our right to challenge law. There are six other cities in Ohio with this law currently in place; crime has not increased because of the passage of these laws and drug dealers didn't move to these counties or

communities. Mayor Williams asked Ms. Wolfinbarger if she is a lobbyist; Ms. Wolfinbarger replied by confirming she is not a lobbyist, but rather, a private citizen who is a patient and she is not paid for what she does. Mayor Williams asked Ms. Wolfinbarger if she is looking at taking away the penalty; Ms. Wolfinbarger confirmed this to be correct, as it is not possible to change the law but it is possible to change the fines and penalties on existing laws. Possession of cannabis will still be considered illegal, but there will be no financial benefit to the city to continue to prosecute, if the law goes into effect. Ms. Wolfinbarger stated if an officer chooses to issue a citation, it will still go on their record but there will be no fines; cannabis-only consumers are not criminals. Mayor Williams asked Mr. Moore about “no penalty, no crime.” Mr. Moore replied by stating there is case law in Ohio, where there is no penalty attached to the crime, then the statute or ordinance is a “nullity,” and is essentially deleted from the books. Mr. Moore is unsure if the county or state will file suit to have this ordinance nullified.

N) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ms. Stevenson mentioned the memo about the application for a CRA tax exemption and confirmed that copies of ordinance 18-2009 were provided to members of Council. In section 11, the ordinance mentions a “Tax Incentive Review Council;” Ms. Stevenson would like clarity as to who this group is and who within the county would have the report that was also mentioned in the ordinance. Mrs. Laake replied by stating the Tax Incentive Review Council meets once a year to review all tax incentive agreements; she served on the group for 15 years as a county representative. The current Norwood representatives are John Hanrahan and Mike Conlon; there is a review that takes place annually and reports have to be filed with the county. They vote on compliance and non-compliance on the terms of the tax incentive; the person receiving the incentive must provide proof that they have met the terms of the agreement each year at the meeting. Mrs. Laake also noted that anything with an abatement over 50% requires Board of Education approval. Mrs. Laake stated the report comes through the Hamilton County Auditor’s office and the Hamilton County Development office; it is a lengthy report that recipients have to fill out each year. Any questions would probably go through the Hamilton County Development office. Ms. Stevenson also asked about section 13 and the CRA program; Mr. Moore replied by stating the ordinance is the program. Ms. Stevenson thanked Mr. Moore and Mrs. Laake for the information they provided.

Mrs. Hanrahan reminded everyone of the University of Cincinnati mobile health mammography van; it will be at the Norwood Community Center on September 19th. Residents may call 584-PINK to schedule an appointment; this service is not just for senior citizens, it is for everyone.

O) NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Hanrahan brought up the topic of bird scooters and lime bikes; she has already received phone calls from residents about scooters being left in yards and on Montgomery Road. She placed the matter into the Housing, Health, and Safety Committee. Mr. Bonsall would like to look at the best practices in other cities to handle these items; unlike red bikes, bird scooters do not have docking stations. Mr. Bonsall acknowledged these may be annoying to some people; reasonable regulations should be placed on these items and Norwood should consider possibly taxing them. Mrs. Hanrahan stated she has already sent emails to other cities about charging fees; she sees the advantage of having these items in Norwood, but also sees the concerns.

Mr. Breadon stated he met with Mr. Yates, the principal of Norwood View Elementary School, to discuss traffic safety around the school; there were several other representatives with the school in attendance at the meeting. He expressed concern about the bottle-neck around a bus dropping off disabled children on Hannaford Avenue. Mr. Breadon wants to raise awareness of these issues to the community, since school is back in session. Mrs. Laake stated the Safe Routes to School program will address some of the safety issues around Norwood View and several other Norwood schools; all schools complain about the student drop-off situation on neighboring streets. Mr. Breadon discussed several of the “wish list” items that were a result of the meeting and he thanked Mr. Yates and everyone else who attended the meeting.

Ms. Stevenson distributed copies of demographic information to all members of Council and the Administration; this will be discussed at the Action Groups meeting taking place tomorrow night from 7pm-9pm at Norwood High School. The Action Groups are part of the Quality of Life Visioning Planning Process. The topics for this meeting includes: housing, infrastructure, community engagement, and community perception. This data was provided to Council to aid in decision making; Ms. Stevenson explained the content of the packets and identified several examples of when/how this data can be utilized by Council committees.

Mr. Bonsall expressed concern about the condition of the stairs between Upper and Lower Millcrest; he referred the matter to the Parks, Streets, and Infrastructure Committee.

Mrs. Hanrahan stated Xavier University students are back in school; bars now have shuttles picking up students in Norwood and taking them to Mt. Adams or downtown. She has spoken with an operator of one of the bars, and he confirmed that students will no longer be picked up in residential areas, but there are other bars now doing this. Mrs. Hanrahan also encouraged other members of Council to take advantage of riding along with the Norwood Police.

Ms. Stevenson stated she participated in a workshop with the national team of LISC (Local Initiative Support Corporation); they discussed “opportunity zones.” An opportunity zone is a tax instrument for investment in low-income census tracts. Southwest Norwood has been identified as an opportunity zone by the state of Ohio; she is recommending a joint committee meeting between the Economic Development and Community Engagement Committee and the Finance, Budget, and Audit Committee. Shovel-ready projects need to be able to be identified and have the ability to be approved.

P) COMMUNICATIONS

1) Letter from Jacob Evans

Re: CVS Liquor Permit Transfer

Mrs. Laake stated she contacted Mr. Evans and spoke with his assistant; CVS currently sells wine, but they are trying to sell beer so that they are able to keep the store afloat. This will not result in any expansion or the hiring of any additional employees. Mayor Williams stated he replied to the email by saying, “no way;” CVS has been there for years and it is a stretch to say this is for economic development. Mayor Williams asked where to draw the line, with regard to granting liquor licenses for economic development; this will open the door to others to say the same. Mr. Moore stated the TREX transfer is designed to stimulate economic development; he had emailed some questions to CVS as to what they are doing with regard to their economic development (rehab, build-out, etc.). CVS replied back to Mr. Moore’s email, stating they are doing nothing; Mr. Moore doesn’t think they are eligible.

Mr. Bonsall stated he talked with general counsel at the Ohio Department of Liquor Control and asked for clarification on economic development; he was told there is nothing set in stone that defines it, but if the city signs off on it being economic development, that they are not in a position to argue if it is or isn’t an economic development. Mr. Bonsall has concerns and would like to learn more about it. Mr. Bonsall expressed concerns about this CVS potentially closing, and the location of the nearest CVS for Norwood residents filling prescriptions. Mrs. Laake invited Mr. Evans to attend this meeting, but he was out of town. Mr. Bonsall would like for Mr. Evans and someone from CVS to be invited to an upcoming meeting to discuss concerns. Mayor Williams expressed his concern about CVS needing to survive by selling beer; Mr. Bonsall stated cigarettes are one of Walgreen’s biggest selling items and CVS has committed to no longer selling cigarettes. Mrs. Hanrahan agrees the matter needs to be look at and considered if it is going to impact the closing of the store.

On a motion by Ms. Stevenson, seconded by Mr. Bonsall, it was moved to receive and file the letter. All present voted, “Yes.”

On a motion by Mr. Bonsall, seconded by Ms. Stevenson, it was moved to have the President of Council invite the CVS counsel and district manager to attend the next Council meeting. All present voted, “Yes.”

2) Letter from Keith Moore

Re: Request for Executive Session

On a motion by Mr. Breadon, seconded by Ms. Stevenson, it was moved to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing pending and imminent litigation, as outlined in the letter. All present voted, “Yes.”

Council entered Executive Session.

Council returned from Executive Session.

Q) EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBER/S

On a motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Breadon, it was moved to excuse Mr. Thompson. All present voted, “Yes”.

R) ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Hanrahan, it was moved to adjourn. All members present voted, “Yes.”



Joseph S. Geers
Clerk of Council



Donna M. Laake
President of Council