

City of Montgomery  
City Council Work Session Minutes  
December 18, 2024

Present

Brian Riblet, City Manager  
Terry Donnellon, Law Director  
Tracy Henao, Asst. City Manager  
Kevin Chesar, Community Development Director  
John Crowell, Police Chief  
Maura Gray, Finance Director  
Gary Heitkamp, Director of Public Works  
Matthew Vanderhorst, Community & Information Services Dir.  
Paul Wright, Fire Chief  
Connie Gaylor, Clerk of Council

City Council Members Present

Ron Messer, Mayor  
Sasha Naiman, Vice Mayor  
Lee Ann Bissmeyer  
Chris Dobrozsi  
Craig Margolis  
Catherine Mills-Reynolds  
Ken Suer

City Council convened in Work Session for December 18, 2024 at 6:07 p.m. at City Hall with Mayor Messer presiding.

**ROLL CALL**

Mayor Messer asked for a motion to dispense with roll call.

Mr. Margolis moved to dispense with the roll call. Vice Mayor Naiman seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

Firefighter Kyle Boeckermann attended Council to introduce his newborn son, Mac, as the newest member of the Montgomery family. Mr. Boeckermann thanked Council for implementing the parental leave policy that allowed him to stay at home after Mac's birth for three months. He explained that the time was so important to help Mac's mother, Lauren with her recovery and to bond with Mac.

City Council congratulated Kyle and Lauren on the birth of Mac and wished them well.

Chief Wright also thanked City Council and Administration for creating the parental leave policy and taking care of the employees.

**LEGISLATION FOR CONSIDERATION THIS EVENING**

**An Ordinance to Modify Appropriations for Current Expenses and Other Expenditures of the City of Montgomery, State of Ohio, During the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2024**

Mayor Messer asked for motion to add this legislation to the agenda for consideration this evening.

Mr. Margolis moved to add the Ordinance to the evening's agenda for consideration. Vice Mayor Naiman seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

Mr. Dobrozsi stated that he would recuse himself from the discussion and vote on this Ordinance as it includes funding for the Montgomery Quarter and could pose a potential professional conflict.

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mr. Suer.

Mr. Suer moved to read the Ordinance by title only. Mr. Margolis seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

Mr. Suer read the title and moved to suspend the second and third readings of the Ordinance. Vice Mayor Naiman seconded.

The roll was called and showed the following vote:

AYE: Bissmeyer, Mills-Reynolds, Messer, Naiman, Suer, Margolis	(6)
NAY:	(0)
ABSTAIN: Dobrozsi	(1)

Ms. Gray explained that as of the December 10 review of appropriations, there are appropriation changes requested to align appropriations with estimated year end expenditures. She stated there are no transfers of cash needed to balance the 2024 Budget. She added that the total reduction in all funds appropriation is \$369,763.10 and that there is an adequate fund balance in each fund to support the appropriations.

Ms. Gray explained the financial impact of the following funds:

- General Fund- Adjustments to the personnel object lines are primarily due to overtime and staffing. The decreases suggested for the non-personal object lines are due to anticipated costs in general operating projects being lower than anticipated. Some operating expenditures were reallocated in the 2025 budget.
- Special Revenue Funds- Due to the new 2024 Final Rule for ARPA funds, all funds previously set aside as a result of the 2022 Final Rule are required to be obligated by 12/31/2024. Applicable expenses from the Capital Project Fund have been reclassified to the Pandemic Relief Fund to comply with the newest Final Rule.
- Debt Service Funds-Increased Montgomery Quarter TIF taxes received necessitated the school compensation to increase as well. In addition, the issuance legal costs on our Bond Anticipation Notes were lower than expected.
- Capital Project Funds- Capital Project funds expended are lower than expected due to the reclassification of some project funds to the Pandemic relief fund to comply with the newest Final Rule for ARPA funds.
- Fiduciary Funds- Compensated Absence funds expended were slightly lower than the amounts budgeted.

All funds total appropriation budget for 2024 is reduced to \$33,855,878.90.

Mr. Suer moved passage of the Ordinance. Vice Mayor seconded.

The roll was called and showed the following vote:

AYE: Mills-Reynolds, Messer, Naiman, Suer, Margolis, Bissmeyer	(6)
NAY:	(0)
ABSTAIN: Dobrozsi	(1)

## **ESTABLISHING AN AGENDA FOR JANUARY 8, 2025 BUSINESS SESSION**

### **PENDING LEGISLATION**

#### **An Ordinance Establishing Compensation For Elected Officials**

Mr. Dobrozsi explained that this would be the third reading of this Ordinance on this legislation that, if approved, would initiate the process to increase compensation for Council Members and the Mayor commencing January 1, 2026. He explained the Charter allows Council to set compensation for Council Members, but the compensation

cannot be increased during a Council Member's term. As a result, those Council Members elected in November 2025 will see an increase in compensation January 1, 2026, whereas those Council Members who are elected for a full term of office in November 2027 will see the increase effective January 1, 2028. Since the Mayor is appointed by Council and the Mayor's term does not commence until after the organizational meeting, the additional stipend for the Office of the Mayor will commence January 1, 2026.

Mr. Dobrozsi asked if there were updates to this legislation.

Mr. Donnellon replied there were none.

The roll was called and showed the following vote:

AYE: Dobrozsi, Messer, Naiman, Suer, Margolis, Bissmeyer, Mills-Reynolds	(7)
NAY:	(0)

### **NEW LEGISLATION**

#### **A Resolution of the City of Montgomery, of Ohio, Supporting the Ohio Commission for the United States Semi-Quincentennial (America250-OH)**

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mrs. Bissmeyer.

Ms. Henao explained that on July 4, 2026, our nation will commemorate and celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. To commemorate and celebrate the country's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, America 250 was created. She added that America 250 – Ohio is a commission charged with preparing the state to participate in the United States of America's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is a multi-year commemoration where Ohioans from all 88 counties will be in the spotlight of the impact Ohio's unique role in our nation's story. The effort will tell the story of Ohio, from the Native Americans to people who call Ohio home today. America 250 – Ohio is requesting assistance from communities throughout Ohio to become official America 250–OH (AM 250-OH) communities and help create exciting and engaging opportunities to celebrate and commemorate the 250th anniversary. AM 250-OH communities will receive special recognition and a designation including signage, website recognition, event promotion, resources, and connections to other AM 250-OH communities. Additionally, there is an opportunity for grant funding to assist with local activations that are supplemental to the programs that America 250 – Ohio is producing statewide.

Ms. Henao stated that it is requested that City Council pass a Resolution supporting the initiative and Montgomery's participation in the program. Given the City's history and dedication to historic preservation and education, Staff believes that becoming an official AM 250-OH community is a natural fit and will aid in drawing more attention and visitors to the City's cherished Heritage District.

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds asked how we expect to intertwine this with our normal events and what other ways do we plan to celebrate.

Ms. Henao explained that we do anticipate conducting the same July events but on a larger scale. She added that staff are already at work brainstorming ideas and that a public art project such as a mural on a downtown business was one example.

Vice Mayor Naiman stated she thought the public art was a good idea. She added that AM250-OH would also create an opportunity to work with other jurisdictions to piggyback on each other's events.

Ms. Henao confirmed that AM250-OH is a yearlong program.

Mr. Suer stated that he thought the grant was worth pursuing.

Mr. Margolis stated he thought it was a great opportunity to offer good programming.

Mayor Messer explained that this Resolution will be added to the January 8, 2025 Business Session agenda with adoption of the Resolution requested at that meeting.

**A Resolution Requesting The County Auditor To Make Tax Advances During The Year 2025 Pursuant To Ohio Revised Code § 321.34**

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mr. Suer.

Ms. Gray explained that, if passed, this Resolution will allow the advance payment of taxes to be drawn on the undivided real estate tax fund of Hamilton County. She reminded City Council that legislation was passed to advance taxes for collection year 2024 on September 4, 2024; however, the passage of the legislation was too late to receive an advance in 2024. She explained that Hamilton County requires passage of this legislation for each collection year so this Resolution would allow for monthly payments to begin in 2025.

Mayor Messer explained that this Resolution will be added to the January 8, 2025 Business Session agenda with adoption of the Resolution requested at that meeting.

**A Resolution Delegating Authority To Make Declarations Of Official Intent And Allocations With Respect To Reimbursements Of Temporary Advances During Fiscal Years 2025 And 2026 Made For Capital Improvements To Be Made From Subsequent Borrowings For The Montgomery Quarter Redevelopment Project (Formerly Known As The Gateway Redevelopment Project)**

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mr. Suer.

Mr. Donnellon explained that this Resolution is required by U.S. Treasury regulations to allow the City to advance certain monies for Stage II of the Montgomery Quarter Redevelopment Project. Under the terms of the current Development Agreement between the City and the Developer, it is anticipated that \$16,000,000 of new bonds will be issued for Stage II. From this bond issue the City is authorized to draw \$1,500,000 to cover the cost for Stage II construction of Public Improvements.

Mr. Donnellon explained that some of the costs for these Public Improvements in Stage II may be advanced in 2025 and 2026 before the bonds are issued. Some of these costs may include engineering and survey work as well as construction of the streetscape. This Resolution, consistent with Treasury regulations, will authorize the City to advance funds today and to be reimbursed later for those expenditures from the Stage II bond issue. This Resolution will extend the City's right to claim reimbursement during calendar years 2025 and 2026.

Mayor Messer explained that this Resolution will be added to the January 8, 2025 Business Session agenda with adoption of the Resolution requested at that meeting.

**ADMINISTRATION REPORT**

Mr. Riblet reported the following items:

- A Council Business Session is scheduled for Wednesday, January 8 at 6:00 p.m.
- The Law and Safety, Financial Planning, and Planning, Zoning and Landmarks Committees have cancelled their meetings for the month of January.
- The Parks and Recreation, Government Affairs, and Public Works Committee meetings on Monday, January 13 will be confirmed at the January 8, 2025 Business Session.

- Staff requests a Public Hearing prior to the January 22 Work Session beginning at 5:45 for the Expansion of a Conditional Use and Final Development Plan for the Gate of Heaven Cemetery located at 11000 Montgomery Road. If Council is so inclined, a motion could be made to commence with the Work Session at the completion of the Public Hearing.

Mr. Margolis moved to commence with the Work Session immediately following the conclusion of the Public Hearing. Vice Mayor Naiman seconded the motion. City Council unanimously agreed.

- Saturday, December 14, Breakfast with Santa was held at Terwilliger Lodge. The event went smoothly, 200+ attended and over \$590 was raised for the Holiday Family Fund. This was Chief Wright's last year greeting parents and children and serving those coming through the food line. We appreciate his commitment to this event through the years.
- An internal team is meeting Friday, December 20, to continue review and discussions of the three firms who submitted to be the CMAR for the proposed Montgomery Road Roundabout Monument project. A preferred firm is hoped to be selected soon.
- Three firms submitted an RFQ for the Design Build of the proposed Safety Center Renovation project. Staff will be meeting in early January to review the submittals and ultimately make a selection in that process as well.
- Ms. Gray reports today that the City exceeded anticipated earnings on interest this year by reaching \$350,000.

#### Events

- City Offices will be closed Tuesday, 12/24 and Wednesday, 12/25 to celebrate the Christmas holiday and, January 1, 2025, for New Years Day.
- A reminder that a Menorah Lighting Ceremony will be held on December 30 beginning at 5:30 p.m., here in Council Chambers.

Mr. Riblet requested an Executive Session to consider the appointment, employment or compensation of a public employee or public official.

#### LAW DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Donnellon stated he had no report but wished Council and Staff a wonderful holiday season.

#### CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

##### Mrs. Bissmeyer

Mrs. Bissmeyer had no report but wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

##### Mrs. Mills-Reynolds

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds reported that the Beautification and Tree and Parks and Recreation Commissions met to celebrate the holidays.

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds reported that she attended a Sycamore Advisory Committee meeting where their new Finance Director reported on the budget and explained that the district would be looking at adding a levy to the November 2025 election ballot.

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds wished everyone a Happy Holiday season.

**Mr. Dobrozsi**

Mr. Dobrozsi reported on the following:

- Arts Commission – The Live at the Uni holiday concert with Mandi Gaines was held and was a great success.
- Sister Cities – Registration for the Soiree En Rosé dinner on February 22, 2025 opened and so far, 64 people have registered.

Mr. Dobrozsi also wished everyone a wonderful holiday.

**Vice Mayor Naiman**

Vice Mayor Naiman reported that the Parks and Recreation Committee met and discussed new Pickleball Rules for the new courts at Weller Park. She explained that the rules would address group play as well as individual play to be inclusive to all who wanted to play. Vice Mayor Naiman added that the Committee also discussed with staff the implementation of a Camp cancellation policy designed to prevent late cancellations of camps.

Vice Mayor Naiman wished everyone a happy holiday with their friends and families.

**Mr. Suer**

Mr. Suer gave kudos to the Public Works department and staff for the Holiday in the Village event and especially the setup of the Christmas tree. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

**Mr. Margolis**

Mr. Margolis reported on the Ohio Public Works Commission, Integrating Committee projects. He also reported on attending the annual WeTHRIVE Recognition Dinner along with Mayor Messer, Ms. Henao and Ms. Gaylor.

Mr. Margolis thanked Mr. Heitkamp for his presentation to six Sycamore High School students who are participating in a scholarship project sponsored by Mr. Margolis to learn about local government and specifically a Public Works process.

Mr. Margolis reported he would be out of town from December 24 through January 3.

Mr. Margolis wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**Mayor Messer**

Mayor Messer explained that he had previously reported that he would be out of town from December 20 through December 22 but that plans have changed so he would be in town.

Mr. Messer thanked staff for the wonderful Holiday in the Village event.

Mayor Messer reported on the WeTHRIVE Annual recognition event.

Mayor Messer added that the staff holiday luncheon was wonderful and an example of the wonderful culture the City has.



**MINUTES**

Mr. Margolis moved to approve the minutes of the December 4 Business Session as written. Vice Mayor Naiman seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**Liquor License Request**

Chief Crowell explained that staff received a notice from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control regarding a change of stock ownership for Kanak India at 10040 B. Montgomery Road. He stated that whenever there is a change in stock ownership the State requires the liquor license to be reviewed and reissued. He explained that he had no objections to the license and recommended that a hearing would not be requested by Council.

Mrs. Bissmeyer made a motion to not request a hearing regarding this license with the Ohio Liquor Control Board. Mr. Margolis seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Messer asked for a motion to adjourn into Executive Session as requested by Mr. Riblet.

Mr. Margolis moved to adjourn into executive session to consider the appointment, employment or compensation of a public employee or public official. Vice Mayor Naiman seconded.

The roll was called and showed the following vote:

AYE: Bissmeyer, Mills-Reynolds, Dobrozsi, Messer, Naiman, Suer, Margolis	(7)
NAY:	(0)

Council adjourned into Executive Session at 7:05 p.m.

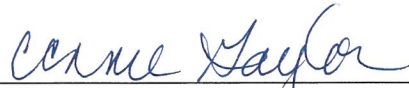
Council reconvened into Public Session at 8:11 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Messer asked for a motion to adjourn.

Vice Mayor Naiman moved to adjourn. Mr. Dobrozsi seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

City Council adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

  
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Connie Gaylor, Clerk of Council