

City of Montgomery
City Council Work Session Minutes
November 20, 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
Amy Frederick, Community & Engagement Coordinator
Connie Gaylor, Clerk of Council

City Council Members Present

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

Council Members Absent

Craig Margolis

City Council convened its Work Session for November 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall with Mayor Messer presiding.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Messer asked for a roll call.

The roll was called with all members in attendance except for Mr. Margolis.

Vice Mayor Naiman moved to excuse Mr. Margolis's absence as he had given prior notice. Mrs. Bissmeyer seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

ESTABLISHING AN AGENDA FOR DECEMBER 4, 2024 BUSINESS SESSION

PENDING LEGISLATION

An Ordinance to Make Appropriations for Current Expenses and Other Expenditures of the City of Montgomery, State of Ohio During the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2025

Mr. Suer explained that the information has been previously supplied on this legislation that, if approved, would adopt this Ordinance that establishes the City's budget for fiscal year 2025. These documents were presented to and reviewed with City Council at the September 12 Budget Review meeting.

Mayor Messer asked if there were any updates on the legislation.

Ms. Gray replied that the updated attachments reflected an increase of \$83,000 since the original budget submission in September. She explained that the update includes an increase to the boards and commission budgets of \$1,000 for next year and the outer years. A \$40,000 increase to the Montgomery Quarter TIF fund for a Sycamore School payment. A \$7,500 increase to the Vintage Club TIF fund for a principal payment due to a timing issue, an increase of \$32,500 for a Vintage Club North principal payment.

A leader of Boy Scout Troop 674 asked what the total budget for the city was.

Ms. Gray explained that it was a total of \$32.6 million.

Mayor Messer explained that this legislation would be added to the agenda for the December 4, 2024 Business for the third and final reading of this Ordinance with the adoption of the Ordinance requested at that meeting.

An Ordinance Establishing Compensation For Elected Officials

Mr. Dobrozsi explained that, if approved, this Ordinance will initiate the process to increase compensation for Council Members and the Mayor commencing January 1, 2026. He explained that the current salaries of \$1,200 annually for council members and \$2,400 for the mayor were set around 1970 and have not been raised since that time. He explained that it was time to raise the salaries to be more in line with current expenses. He added that the proposed pay would be \$5,000 annually for council members and \$6,000 annually for the mayor. He explained that the Charter allows Council to set compensation for Council Members, but the compensation cannot be increased during a Council Member's term so the current council members would not see the raise unless they are reelected to another term.

Mayor Messer explained that this Ordinance will be added to the December 4, 2024 Business Session agenda for the second reading. The third reading will be held at the January 8, 2025 Business Session with adoption of the Ordinance requested at that meeting.

NEW LEGISLATION

A Resolution Adopting a Five-Year Capital Improvement Program for The City of Montgomery

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mr. Suer.

Ms. Gray explained that City Council is requested to consider this Resolution that would adopt the City's proposed Five-Year Capital Improvement Program. This was reviewed by City Council as a companion piece to the proposed 2025 Operating and Capital Budget with Four Year Forecast and represents a comprehensive planning tool for capital investment in the community over the next five years.

Mayor Messer explained that this Resolution will be added to the December 4, 2024 Business Session agenda with adoption of the Resolution requested at that meeting.

A Resolution Authorizing The City Manager To Enter Into A Contract With Anthem (Dba Anthem ERC And Anthem) To Provide Medical Insurance And Dental Insurance For Full-Time Employees

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mr. Dobrozsi.

Ms. Julie Prickett, Human Resource Manager and member of the Health Care Benefits Committee (HCBC), introduced the other members of the committee in attendance : Finance Director Maura Gray, Sgt. T.J. Shreve, Firefighter Mike Young, and Public Works Service Worker II Tony Brothers. She added that Officer Craig Flick was there to observe. Ms. Prickett also introduced Emily Lehn with Hub Horan who works on our behalf to quote out health care and dental plans for the City.

Ms. Prickett explained that earlier this year, Ms. Lehn recommended that the City pursue a "no bid" renewal with Anthem. This recommendation was based on preliminary information that indicated the City's group utilization numbers were favorable, making retaining our group's business attractive to Anthem. Consequently, Anthem offered a 5% renewal of the same plan design for the 2025 benefit year. The 5% renewal is lower than national renewal trends which are averaging increases of 8% to 9%. In addition, Anthem indicated that our group was eligible for another plan option (Anthem ERC) with a 6% renewal.

Ms. Prickett added that the Anthem ERC plan offers the same plan design as the regular Anthem renewal; however, additional advantages and cost-savings opportunities are available with the Anthem ERC plan. The Anthem ERC plan covers a list of preventive prescription drugs at 100%. These preventive prescription drugs address the following common major health risk categories: heart health and high blood pressure, osteoporosis, diabetes, mental health, and high cholesterol. In addition, with the Anthem ERC plan our group could earn a 2% renewal discount each year based on employees and spouses scheduling annual physicals with a primary care physician. The City

could also receive a return of up to 10% of paid premiums (after the first renewal) if utilization is less than expected. The Anthem ERC plan also reports more information than the regular Anthem plan (or other carriers' plans to groups our size) regarding premium costs compared to claims costs, as well as more information regarding large claims costs.

Ms. Prickett closed by explaining that the Health Care Benefits Committee decided to recommend the Anthem ERC plan option, which closely matches the current plan and represents a 6.0% increase over current premium costs. Although the Anthem ERC plan represents a 6% increase and the regular Anthem plan renewal represents a 5% increase over current rates, the Health Care Benefits Committee determined that the advantages the Anthem ERC plan offers (e.g. numerous preventive prescriptions covered at 100%, the potential to earn back up to 10% of paid premiums, and a potential 2% renewal discount for member participation in primary care physician visits for annual physical exams) make this plan the best and potentially most cost-effective choice in the long run.

Mr. Suer stated that he felt that staff's system of managing the health care and dental quotes, and contract is excellent. He stated that we are fortunate that Ms. Prickett has been involved every year and that including employees makes the process unique and highly effective.

Vice Mayor Naiman thanked staff for continuing the process of seeking the best possible rates and coverage for City staff.

Mr. Dobrozsi also thanked staff and Ms. Lehn for their work in keeping costs down. He asked what ERC stood for.

Ms. Lehn replied that the ERC is a human resource coalition that partnered with Anthem.

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds stated that staff has done an excellent job in obtaining a better plan with a very small increase. She asked what percentage of staff utilize the insurance plan.

Ms. Prickett replied that there were only four staff members who were not utilizing the insurance plan.

Ms. Gray added that at the beginning of 2025 there would only be one person who will not utilize the insurance plan.

Mrs. Bissmeyer thanked staff. She asked what percentage of staff must participate in the wellness plan to earn a percentage of premiums back.

Ms. Lehn replied that 50% would have to participate.

Mrs. Bissmeyer asked if there were enough participants to qualify for the return of premiums, how would that be returned.

Ms. Lehn explained that the return would not be applied until the following renewal period as it would be based on a full plan year. She added that the City would decide how to apply the savings. She stated it could be applied to premiums or returned to employees.

Mr. Riblet thanked the HCBC and staff overall as the past 12 months had a lower exposure in claims. He stated that there were obstacles that made quoting out a new plan a challenge including Horan selling to the Hub, Ms. Lehn becoming the representative after a not so positive experience with the last representative, and then Humana leaving the commercial insurance industry. He gave Ms. Lehn and the HCBC kudos for their great work.

Ms. Bissmeyer asked if the City's participation in the WeTHRIVE initiative and mental health programming had a positive effect on the quote.

Ms. Prickett explained that those were important things, but the quotes focus on utilization of the insurance.

Mayor Messer explained that this Resolution will be added to the December 4, 2024 Business Session agenda with adoption of the Resolution requested at that meeting.

A Resolution Establishing City Contributions for Health Care Benefits

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mr. Dobrozsi.

Ms. Prickett explained that this Resolution was an annual companion to the health care legislation as it sets caps for the cost of healthcare benefits for employee group insurance for the twelve-month period of January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025. She explained that for many years, the City has increased these "caps" by six percent (6%) for medical insurance and three percent (3%) for dental insurance. This practice allows for some increase in the cost of healthcare but also ensures that significant increased costs are shared between the City and its employees.

Mayor Messer explained that this Resolution will be added to the December 4, 2024 Business Session agenda with adoption of the Resolution requested at that meeting.

A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Enter into a Contract with CT Associates, Inc. For Professional Services Related To General Engineering And Architectural Services For Calendar Year 2025

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mrs. Bissmeyer.

Mr. Heitkamp explained that, if approved, this Resolution would authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract with CT Consultants, Inc. for professional engineering and architectural services for calendar year 2025. The City has contracted with CT Consultants for 33 years to provide civil, traffic, structural, electrical and storm water engineering services. CT Consultants has provided a competitive fee structure for 2025 including slight hourly rate increases for engineering services.

Mayor Messer explained that this Resolution will be added to the December 4, 2024 Business Session agenda with adoption of the Resolution requested at that meeting.

A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Contract With National Inspection Corporation For Professional Services To Serve As Building Official And To Provide Plan Review And Field Inspection Authority And Services For The City's Building Department For The Calendar Year 2025

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mrs. Bissmeyer.

Mr. Chesar explained that, if approved, this Resolution would authorize the City Manager to enter a contract with National Inspection Corporation for professional services to serve as Building Official and to provide plan review and field inspection authority and services for the City's Building Department for the calendar year 2025. He added that the applicant pays for the fees of this service.

Mayor Messer explained that this Resolution will be added to the December 4, 2024 Business Session agenda with adoption of the Resolution requested at that meeting.

An Ordinance Amending Chapter 34 Of The Montgomery Code Of Ordinances To Modify Sick Leave Benefits

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mr. Dobrozsi.

Mr. Riblet explained that on May 15, 2024, City Council approved Ordinance #5 which included an initial group of modifications to Chapter 34. This modification request is specific to Section 34.05 (B) Sick Leave and would provide a minimal increase in the accrual rate. Mr. Riblet explained that as part of the work associated with Goal F of the current Strategic Plan, staff evaluated Chapter 34 to continue the desire of cultivating a "Top Workplace"

culture and doing this by increasing our abilities to both recruit and retain exceptional employees to ensure staffing levels and quality of services are meeting the demands of our community. He explained that this modification would increase the sick leave accrual rate from 3.692 hours per pay to 4.615 hours per pay. He stated that it would result in an additional 24 hours of accrued sick leave a year. Mr. Riblet explained that the buyback and retirement payout effect would be minimal.

Mr. Riblet brought attention to an error on the redlined attachment. He explained that in Section 34.05 Employee Leave Benefits, item 4 shows an amended number of hours from 320 to 324. He stated that it should have been 328, but that the Ordinance had it listed correctly. Mr. Riblet stated that he felt by modifying this accrual that it would ensure that the City is competitive. He asked that Council consider suspending the second and third readings so the Ordinance could be in effect at the beginning of January.

Mr. Dobrozsi asked if there was an unfunded liability that we face when accruing these payouts.

Mr. Riblet replied there was as the State says the fund needs to be higher.

Mr. Suer stated he felt this would be a minimal increase and is fine with the change.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Mr. Riblet reported the following items:

- A Council Business Session is scheduled for Wednesday, December 4 at 6:00 p.m.
- The Law and Safety Committee will meet on Monday, December 2 at 5:00 p.m. The Financial Planning Committee has rescheduled their meeting to Monday, December 9. The Planning, Zoning and Landmarks Committee has cancelled their meeting for the month of December.
- The Parks and Recreation, Government Affairs, and Public Works Committee meetings on Monday, December 9 will be confirmed at the December 4 Business Session.
- The 2025 OKI Board Member submission is due by December 1. A motion is needed for who will serve in this position. Vice Mayor Naiman made a motion to appoint Council Member Dobrozsi to continue serving on the OKI Board. Mrs. Bissmeyer seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.
- House Bill 296 regarding the Police and Fire pension fund increase has passed the House Pension Committee and is now in the House for consideration. He explained that the increase, if approved, would begin in 2025 with .75% increase annually until the contribution reaches the 24% employer match requirement. Mr. Riblet stated that it would result in an additional \$124,000 annually once the full percentage is reached.
- Interviews with the three firms interested in the CMAR process for the Montgomery Road Roundabout Monument project will take place on December 9.
- The RFQ soliciting Criteria Architect firms for the Safety Center project has been advertised. The deadline for submissions is December 12. Thank you to Council members Suer, Margolis and Dobrozsi for offering to be a part of this process.

266 Human Resources

- 267 • Mechanic position – Ryan Fife will begin employment with the City on December 2. Ryan is
268 currently the lead mechanic with the City of Kettering where he has worked for ten years. He holds
269 multiple ASE certifications and has extensive experience with a variety of vehicles and equipment.
- 270 • Three interviews for the Assistant Police Chief position have been conducted. An announcement
271 on this promotion is anticipated within the next two weeks.

272 Events

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- 274 • City offices will be closed next Thursday and Friday in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.
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276 Mr. Riblet requested an Executive Session to consider confidential information of an applicant for
277 economic development assistance.
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279 LAW DIRECTOR REPORT

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281 Mr. Donnellon stated he would report his items during the requested Executive Session. He wished everyone a very
282 Happy Thanksgiving.
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284 CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

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286 Mrs. Bissmeyer

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288 Mrs. Bissmeyer reported that she attended a Hamilton County Library Board meeting. She explained that the
289 Cincinnati Library Branch was the second busiest library in the nation, New York City was the busiest. She added
290 that the Symmes branch was the second busiest in Hamilton County.
291

292 Mrs. Bissmeyer reported that she attended the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner where Ms.
293 Henao and Mr. Donnellon were both nominated for awards.
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295 Mrs. Mills-Reynolds

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297 Mrs. Mills-Reynolds reported that the annual board and commission training has been held at both the Beautification
298 and Tree and Parks and Recreation Commission meetings. She stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission is
299 researching holding a Bike Safety Class.
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301 Mrs. Mills-Reynolds reported that she attended a Sycamore Advisory Committee meeting where they are focused
302 on projects that include the review of early start times for the elementary school students, the pros and cons of public
303 and private school enrollment collaboration, and the project she is involved in focused on finding alternatives to
304 school suspensions.
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306 Mrs. Mills-Reynolds reported that she attended the Blue Ash Veterans Day ceremony along with Mayor Messer
307 and Council Member Suer.
308

309 Mr. Dobrozsi

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311 Mr. Dobrozsi reported on the following:
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- 313 • Arts Commission projects:

- 2025 events being planned include a Food Tour and the Photo Contest. The October Live at the Uni Concert went well, and the next concert is the holiday concert on December 15 featuring Mandi Gaines.
- Sister Cities is working on the newly named, Soiree En Rosé dinner on February 22, 2025. Registration will begin for this event on December 2.
- Government Affairs Committee items:
 - The 2024 holiday card was approved featuring the MQ Christmas Tree.
 - Cobranding was discussed with a presentation by Ms. Henao on options of themes, aesthetics, and how the cobranding would be managed with local businesses.
 - Surplus furniture was approved for the Finance Department to be sold on Govdeals.com.

Vice Mayor Naiman

Vice Mayor Naiman shared that during this time of Thanksgiving, she felt gratitude for the collaboration and teamwork of staff and council, for the areas of expertise that staff and council have that provide a high level of trust in the functions of the city, and the shared commitment to the city by Council and staff.

Mr. Suer

Mr. Suer reported that the Landmarks Commission approved a sign for a new business downtown, The New York Butcher Shoppe.

Mayor Messer

Mayor Messer reported on the Veterans Day events he attended. He stated that the Hopewell Grave Marking ceremony was well attended with approximately 410 graves marked with a flag for the veterans laid to rest there. He added that he also attended the Blue Ash Veterans Ceremony.

Mayor Messer reported that the Diversity and Inclusion Commission was holding the 2nd Annual Menorah Lighting ceremony on December 30 at 5:45 p.m. at City Hall.

MINUTES

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds moved to approve the minutes of the November 6 Business Session. Vice Mayor Naiman seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Vice Mayor Naiman moved to adjourn into executive session to consider confidential information of an applicant for economic development assistance. Mr. Dobrozsi seconded.

The roll was called and showed the following vote:

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

367
368 Council adjourned into Executive Session at 7:05 p.m.
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370 Council reconvened into Public Session at 8:07 p.m.
371

372 **ADJOURNMENT**
373

374 Mayor Messer asked for a motion to adjourn.
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376 Mrs. Bissmeyer moved to adjourn. Mrs. Mills-Reynolds seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.
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378 City Council adjourned at 8:07 p.m.
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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Connie Gaylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. It is positioned above a horizontal line.

Connie Gaylor, Clerk of Council