

EP COUNCIL 5/8/23 85 N. MARKET ST. 7:00 PM

Mayor Conaway called the meeting to order, present was Ms. May, Mr. Povenski, Dr. Rocco, Mr. Runnion, Mr. Simpson and Mr. Walker. Also present was Village Manager/Finance Director Traci Spratt, Chief Jim Brown, W/WW Superintendent Scott Wolfe, Chief Keith Drabick, Street Superintendent Steve Baird, Clerk Misti Martin and BZ Inspector CH McCutcheon. Atty. Powers was on vacation. The minutes of the 4/24/23 meeting were approved on a motion by Dr. Rocco, seconded by Mr. Walker. The April 2023 department reports were approved on a motion by Dr. Rocco seconded by Ms. May. There was no clerk's, law director's, park/rec/cem, utility or safety committee reports

AGENDA: JOHN SIMON-DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION. Mr. Simon stated a group of community members have been meeting the last couple months to brainstorm ideas/projects to gain momentum moving forward in a positive direction. Mr. Simon gave a brief presentation in reference to the downtown area including sidewalks (incorporating brick work similar to the front of the library or Rite Aid and making them handicapped accessible), light poles with underground wiring that would allow for banners, lining the downtown with trees, benches/trash receptacles (keeping some of what we have and building from there), more murals. In reference to sidewalks Mr. Simon said some work has been done but the goal would be to connect the school to the downtown to the park with common sidewalks as well as adding lighting. He also noted the sidewalks exiting the park are very narrow and that they would like to see those widened to accommodate more foot traffic and also extend the sidewalks to the Historical Society Log Cabin as a lot of people probably don't even know what that is. This citizen group had a discussion with Howells and Baird (who were very much involved in Columbiana's sidewalk projects) and they have a proposal from them to do the initial survey/mapping to find out what we have and what needs looked into, this would also include underground utilities starting at the lowest utility and replacing all the way up and finishing up with the sidewalks. He said the initial study would be for improvements to Market St. from Garfield to Grant. They study would include recommendations for sidewalks, curbs, brick inlays, storm sewers, catch basins, street lighting, benches, planter areas, trash receptacles, water, sanitary sewer, gas services, underground electric, traffic signals and asphalt resurfacing. He said they will also look at accessibility issues, pocket parks, public parking, gathering areas and public restrooms. The cost of this initial survey is \$38,500.00, after that would be design which would be six to nine months. Mr. Simon stated that Manager Spratt has been working with the Port Authority on a project and the plan is to try to mesh the two plans together. Simon said this plan would be done in multiple phases. Mr. Simpson asked if there would be any overlap with the SRTS grant that has already been done, Mr. Simon stated that is where the Howells and Baird survey will come into play showing what has and has not been done. Ms. May stated the Port Authority was specifically looking at lighting and possibly rehabbing some store fronts as well looking for ways to tie the town together to make it a destination center. Mr. Simon stated there would be some overlap but that we need to make sure we take advantage of the Port authority. Manager/Finance Director Spratt asked Mr. Simon if the group had been in discussion with anyone about where the funds for the survey would come from, Mr. Simon stated NS was at the last meeting they had when it was discussed and also the million dollars the NS had offered for a project in town was an option. Spratt asked if Council wanted her to pursue this; Mr. Simpson made a motion to direct Spratt to move forward on this, the motion was seconded by Ms. May and passed unanimously. **JUSTIN POWERS-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** Mr. Powers stated he was here to present on a needs assessment that would amplify the recovery effort in EP. He stated he has pulled together two consulting firms based in Pittsburg that are requesting opportunities to present to village leadership a concept of providing professional support in four main areas of need. Those companies are Trailblaze (who currently represents Threshold) and the Caligiuri Group. Mr. Powers stated the four areas of need are 1) Developing a community census to address concerns from residents that have not been addressed yet. 2) Economic Impact Analysis which addresses the scope/scale of damage caused by the derailment and identify the most effective ways to support local businesses and residents. 3) Stakeholder collaboration- there are many stakeholders working on different opportunities for the Village and this would help coordinate all of those efforts. 4) The fourth and final area is public affairs strategy, too many politicians/government agencies have been

to town and leaving us with big problems and ambiguous follow up. He said engaging in lobbying efforts and managing the political aspects of the derailment as it allows the community to advocate in the decision-making process with the government and other political organizations. He said professional support will promote collaboration and collaboration is the key to the future of East Palestine. Spratt stated that some of these issues may be addressed with the PR firm that we just started working with and also that the Village, the EMA, as well as NS have just started working with a company on what the long-term goals for the village should be. Mr. Powers stated that a PR firm is only as good as the information you feed them and also that PR and public affairs are two different things. Mr. Powers stated he would facilitate the two firms to come to the May 22 meeting to present plans.

MANAGER: Manager Spratt stated Jeremy V. from NS was going to speak on an upcoming volunteer day on 6/17 sponsored by NS that would start at 9:00 a.m. He said they are compiling list of needed tasks based on conversations with community members. The locations of the tasks include the park, historical society, Market St., City Lake and other areas. All materials for tasks will be provided by NS. He said they are in the process of creating a website where volunteers can sign up to volunteer. From the 3:00 to 5:00 pm after work has been completed all volunteers will meet back at the park for refreshments/food as well as a live band. Should the proposal be accepted, he will attend the May 22 meeting with a specific list of projects for this day of service. He feels this a good opportunity to bring community members together and regain a sense of pride for the town. Mr. Runnion asked why NS was asking for volunteers for this event, Mr. Vranesvich stated this a way to get people involved in the community where they live and give them a sense of sweat equity. Council was in favor of the project. Mr. Vranesvich next spoke on a project at city lake for the day of service that include removing the old benches, picnic tables and garbage cans around the lake and install all new of the same (maintenance free versions) which includes excavation done by Dynamic Structures. Another part of the project is an additional parking area for 10 vehicles as well as provide direct access to the middle of the lake. Spratt then stated that she had asked resident Zac Dunn to work on a grant that is available from T-Mobile. Mr. Dunn stated this is a \$50,000.00 grant (there are 25 grants per quarter) that is available through T Mobile for an additional project at City Lake. He said T-Mobile has a series of grants that's are geared toward communities of 50,000 people or less that help bring the community together as a whole. In reference to the project should we get approved for the grant Street Superintendent Baird stated he would like to drain/dredge City Lake and make some other needed repairs as well as add handicapped accessible docks for fishing. Mr. Dunn stated that Dynamic Structures would also like to assist with this project, Mr. McCrae is working on a plan for the project to attach to the grant application as well as letters of support from community organizations. He noted the application has to be submitted to T-Mobile by June 30 and we should know by August 30 if we are awarded the grant. Dr. Rocco asked if when the project was completed if kayakers would be allowed to use the lake, Str. Superintendent Baird stated that ODNR wants more people to use the lake and as long as there is notification that kayaking would "at your own risk" there is no insurance issue, additionally once the project is completed ODNR will restock the lake with fish. Mr. Dunn noted City Lake is an asset to the community that is underutilized. Fin Dir/Int Mgr. Spratt stated her thoughts were to allow NS to go with phase one of the project (benches/tables/garbage cans), if we are awarded the T-Mobile grant use that for phase 2 (dredging/new docks) and if need be, seek additional funding after that. Dr. Rocco made a motion to allow Jeremy & NS to move forward with phase one of the City Lake project, seconded by Mr. Povenski and passed unanimously. Spratt stated she spoke with Korn Ferry about the manager's position and needs to schedule a meeting with Council, in reference to the finance clerk position she stated she needed to schedule interviews and asked who on council wants to be involved, Dr. Rocco stated all council should be there. Spratt stated that Social Concerns will pay the cost of half of all seasons passes for those residents inside the school district. In A special council meeting has been called for Tuesday May 16 at 6:00 pm to meet with Korn Ferry, an executive recruiting firm in reference to the vacant village manager position. The meeting will be held in executive session reference to the waterline replacement project W/WW Superintendent Scott Wolfe stated bids were open and they all came in several million dollars under what was expected which will allow more streets be done. Spratt then discussed a contract modification for MS Consultants and also stated that the Park Drive Bridge replacement project could potentially be starting in June.

MAYOR: Mayor Conaway he along with Superintendent Baird and Fin Dir/Mgr. Spratt will be compiling a list of areas that will need repaired from the construction/clean up being done by NS. On June 10 there will be a 5K walk/race in town, Matt Werner, the event organizer spoke on the subject. Mr. Werner stated that Compco Industries and the United Way are sponsoring this fundraising event to benefit youth organizations in EP, so far, they have raised over \$82,000.00. They will have the runners on the west side of town and the walkers will go down Market St. in hopes to bring awareness to the small businesses in town and also have that visual of people walking over the railroad tracks down into town. We don't want people to be fearful of coming into town. In reference to Taggart St. being closed, he said he knows it is an inconvenience however it is still very much a safety hazard, he said there have been no major injuries since the derailment and he wants to keep it that way.

STREET: Mr. Walker stated he is concerned that there are residents in the evacuation area that still cannot return to their homes and are now getting letters about high grass at their property, he said we need to relax enforcing that ordinance for this year. Fin Dir/Mgr. Spratt stated the grass at the properties is only going to continue to get higher which will bring rodents, these properties still need to be maintained. These letters are our first notification of the season. Mr. Walker stated NS should mow the grass for them. Mayor Conaway and Dr. Rocco stated if there are health concerns with the homes, we can't make them go back to maintain them. Jeremy V. of NS stated he would be willing to work with BZ office to get those properties mowed by a landscape company at the expense of NS (displaced residents within the one-mile evacuation zone). Dr. Rocco stated that anyone in EP who felt unsafe were allowed to stay elsewhere during this time should also be getting their grass mowed.

DEV/FIN: Ms. May stated a committee meeting will be held 5/11 at 6:00 pm as well as another zoom meeting in the near future with the Port Authority.

SAFETY: NO REPORT

THERE WERE NO VISITORS COMMENTS ON CURRENT LEGISLATION

VISITORS: John Davis, Ron & Peggy Caratelli, Brenda Povenski, Melissa Smith, Jerry Coblenz, Kent & Darlene Chapman, Mike Dugan, Erin & Brian Stauffer, Terry Keresty, Bill & Janie Strohecker, Kristin Wong, Jason Pettway, Jim Wilson, Justin Powers, John Simon, Marty Grim, Jeremy Vranesevich, Zac Dunn, Barb Herriot, Sandy Rafferty, David Peters, Steph Elverd (Morning Journal), Rick & Karen Gorby, Aaron Allison, Matt Werner, Scott Wolfe.

LEGISLATION: Mr. Runnion introduced Ord. 10-2023 for a second reading and made a motion that it be read by title only seconded by Mr. Walker. **An ordinance authorizing the Municipal Manager to advertise for public bids for the construction/paving to be known as the 2023 Street Resurfacing Project and to further award and enter into a contract with the lowest and best bidder as relates to the contract, pursuant to the specifications and bidding requirements as determined by the Municipal Manager and in compliance with law.** Mr. Runnion introduced Ord. 11-2023 for a second reading and made to be read by title only seconded by seconded by Mr. Walker. **An ordinance authorizing the payment of wage bonus to temporary summer employees for 2023 and declaring an emergency.** Mr. Runnion made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency, seconded by seconded by Dr. Rocco, passed unanimously. Mr. Runnion called for a vote on Ord.11-2023. 6 yes to pass. Mr. Runnion introduced Ord. 12-2023 for a second reading and made a motion that it be read by title only seconded by Mr. Walker. **An ordinance authorizing Village Manager to engage the services of professional services firms (public relations firm, outside counsel and other support services as needed) and to expend additional funds for the administrative expenses related to recovery from the train derailment and declaring an emergency.** Mr. Runnion made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency seconded by Ms. May. Passed unanimously. Mr. Runnion called for a vote on Ord. 12-2023. 6 yes to pass. Mr. Runnion introduced Ord. 13-2023 for a second reading and made a motion that it be read by title only, seconded by Mr. Walker. **An ordinance amending Chapter 832 of the Codified Ordinances of East Palestine, Ohio related to licensing of solicitors, peddlers and door to door sales persons.** Mr. Runnion introduced Ord. 14-2023 and made a motion that it be read by title only, seconded by Mr. Walker. **An ordinance authorizing the Village Manager to proceed with the**

Village of East Palestine water distribution system improvements, and to enter into a contract with the lowest and best bidder, as provided by law, and as specified in the exhibit(s) attached hereto and made a part here of and declaring an emergency. Mr. Runnion made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency, seconded by Dr. Rocco. Passed unanimously. Mr. Runnion called for a vote on Ord. 14-2023. 6 yes to pass.

ADJOURN: Mr. Simpson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Runnion. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

MISTI J. MARTIN CLERK

MAYOR TRENT CONAWAY