

SUMMARY OF CAUCUS DISCUSSION AND MINUTES OF THE STRONGSVILLE CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 4, 2020.

The Council of the City of Strongsville met in the Caucus Room at the Mike Kalinich Sr. City Council Chamber, 18688 Royalton Road, on **Monday, May 4, 2020 at 7:45 p.m.**

Present: Council Members: Matthew A. Schonhut, Annmarie P. Roff, James A. Kaminski, Gordon C. Short Joseph C. DeMio, Kelly A. Kosek and James E. Carbone. Also Present: Clerk of Council Aimee Pientka. **Administration:** Mayor Thomas P. Perciak, Law Director Neal M. Jamison, Finance Director Joseph Dubovec, Communications and Technology Director David E. Sems and Human Resource Director Steve Kilo.

Absent: Economic Development Director Brent Painter, Service Director Joe Walker, Building Commissioner Mike Miller, City Engineer Ken Mikula and Recreation and Senior Services Director Bryan Bogre, Fire Chief Jack Draves, Police Chief Mark Fender and Public Safety Director Charles Goss.

Council President Schonhut called the caucus to order at 7:45 p.m.

The following Council Committees met to review legislation on the agenda:

Public Safety and Health Committee: Chairman Short recommended suspension and adoption for Ordinance No. 2020-071. This is an ordinance to approve an application for financial assistance with the Ohio Attorney General's Office in connection with their law enforcement diversion program for Fiscal Year 2020 relating to the opioid epidemic.

Finance Committee:

Motion made by Mr. DeMio, second by Mr. Short, to approve the Finance Committee meeting minutes of April 27, 2020. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Committee of the Whole: Mr. Schonhut advised Ordinance No. 2020-072 is to repeal Chapters 810, 844, 846, 864, 870,872 and 874 of the Business Regulation and Taxation Code of the Codified Ordinances. This will be placed on first reading tonight to give Mr. Jamison time to review and cross reference State and Federal code. Ordinance No. 2020-073 is to amend Chapter 208 of the Codified Ordinances concerning public meetings. Suspension and adoption was recommended for this legislation. Suspension and adoption was also recommended for Ordinance No. 2020-074; an ordinance amending sections 220.02(g) and (i), as well as 230.04, of the Codified Ordinances. Mr. Jamison stated he is trying to streamline the city's Code book. Mr. Jamison looked at things that were outdated or no longer serve a purpose as it pertains to the operation of the city. Mr. Jamison also made sure these were all consistent with State law.

MINUTES OF THE STRONGSVILLE CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 4, 2020 IN THE MIKE KALINICH SR. CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

CALL TO ORDER:

Council President Schonhut called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. All joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CERTIFICATION OF POSTING:

The Clerk of Council certified that the meeting had been posted in accordance with Ordinance No. 2004-273.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Council Members: Matthew A. Schonhut, Annmarie P. Roff, James A. Kaminski, Gordon C. Short Joseph C. DeMio, Kelly A. Kosek and James E. Carbone. Also Present: Clerk of Council Aimee Pientka. **Administration:** Mayor Thomas P. Perciak, Law Director Neal M. Jamison, Finance Director Joseph Dubovec, Communications and Technology Director David E. Sems and Human Resource Director Steve Kilo.

Absent: Economic Development Director Brent Painter, Service Director Joe Walker, Building Commissioner Mike Miller, City Engineer Ken Mikula and Recreation and Senior Services Director Bryan Bogre, Fire Chief Jack Draves, Police Chief Mark Fender and Public Safety Director Charles Goss.

COMMENTS ON MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on April 20, 2020 were approved as submitted.

APPOINTMENTS, CONFIRMATIONS, AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS:

(None)

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES:

SCHOOL BOARD – Mr. Carbone: Yes, there has not been a school board meeting since our last meeting; but I do want to thank all the teachers that are working diligently to create the remote learning environment for the kids. I also want to thank my daughter, Lucia, and my son's school-Surrarer and all the teachers for the paradee throughout our neighborhood and all the neighborhoods that feed into Surrarer. Just as an update for commencement, there is not one at this time. They are going to come out with an announcement this week. Right now, the prom makeup date is still set for June 26th; but obviously, that's pending whatever happens in the next couple of weeks. That ends my report.

Mayor Perciak – Jim, I do believe that there is an alternative plan for commencement on a scheduled day; but I do not know all the particulars yet. I know they have spoken to our police chief. As I understand it, it's going to be you drive up, receive your diploma and you leave; but I don't have any of the particulars yet from the schools. I do know they are going to recognize our graduates somehow. This is just recently.

Mr. Carbone – Absolutely. How they do it is the question.

Mayor Perciak – Correct.

Mr. Carbone – That ends my report.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES (cont'd):

SCHOOL BOARD – Mr. Carbone (cont'd):

Mr. Schonhut – Thank you Jim, and I just want to echo I think it's awesome; I think a lot of the elementary schools have done something in some way or another to allow the teachers to see the kids in some type of parade fashion that I think is putting a lot of smiles on a lot of faces. I think it's a pretty cool thing that they are all coming together to do that. Anybody else have anything for Mr. Carbone?

(No comments)

SOUTHWEST GENERAL HEALTH SYSTEM – Mr. Short: Thank you Mr. Schonhut, we have a board meeting this upcoming Wednesday; but in the interim I will give a report. Bill Young, the president and CEO, has done a great job of keeping the cities, in the area that Southwest services, up to date. Just some quick updates from the hospital system- on terms of the COVID-19 patients, they have tested more than 300 people at the hospital, they have treated 60 confirmed positive case and have had 14 deaths related to COVID. They have been having an in-patient census of 3 positive cases per day at Southwest General. Overall, hospital volume, obviously, is down and lower than projected from budget, along with total surgeries and outpatient revenue all down; but that was to be expected with the governor's stay-at-home order no elective surgeries were to be done. That has just been changed as of May 1st; so they're hoping to see some uptick now in those procedures now that the governor has allowed elective surgeries so long as there are no hospital stays and it's not greater than 24 hours. They do have sufficient inventory of PPE equipment on-site. They are applying for more assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for additional expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, some very good news, once again Southwest General was named to the Plain Dealer's, "Top Workplaces List." It's a summary of one of the best places to work in Northeast Ohio. Again, I always have to say, what a great asset we have in the community with Southwest General Hospital. I'll have hopefully more next meeting after the board meeting but I'll happily take any questions.

Mr. Schonhut – Thank you Mr. Short, does anybody have any questions for Mr. Short?

(No comments)

BUILDING AND UTILITIES – DeMio: We have nothing before this committee tonight. I'll field questions otherwise.

Mr. Schonhut – Thank you Mr. DeMio, any questions?

(No comments)

COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY – Ms. Roff: Nothing at this time, I will take questions though.

Mr. Schonhut – Thank you Ms. Roff, any questions for Ms. Roff?

(No comments)

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES (cont'd):

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Mr. Carbone: For Economic Development, we do not have a meeting planned in May so far with everything going on. We're going to wait a couple weeks to see where the governor is with some things; maybe in the future, talking about having a meeting at the center of town where we are outside and distancing ourselves- going over a couple of the items that we were working on last year and the early part of this year. For right now, that's it.

Ms. Kosek – I just want to comment to Jim; I just wonder if we might consider (unintelligible) that we wanted to talk about...that we could talk about the zoom meeting with the committee members and make that publicly available if we wanted to try and have a meeting that way.

Mr. Carbone – Yes, I mean, right now there are a lot of things that we're all passionate about; but there's other pressing issues that I think are first and foremost and our attention should be towards those. I think towards the end of the month that may be an option, of doing a zoom meeting, or what have you, could absolutely be done. You know you'd be helping me with that, right Kelly?

Ms. Kosek – That's why I mentioned it, I'd be happy to help.

Mayor Perciak – If I may Jim chime in here a bit, Kelly and all the council know that Brent Painter, myself, Joe Dubovec, Jim Carbone and whomever was a part of this...Jim Kaminski and so many of the others have been forwarding to us some of our small businesses that needed the PPP loans. We have worked very close with all of our business community and if they needed assistance in receiving these loans. I have to say the banks have been very receptive to our intervention. The banks have been very kind in helping us help our businessmen here in town; so a special thank you to everybody who has helped our local businesses obtain the PPP loans that were granted through the federal government. To our individual loan officers at all of our banks; whether they be in our community or outside of our community, for helping assist our businessmen and women obtain their loans. Mr. Carbone last week was on a phone call with the owner of Jennifers; and that's just an example of a small business loan. We immediately jumped in there and between Brent, myself and Jimmy, were helpful in obtaining Maryann, from Jennifers, her PPP loan which she was unable to or didn't have the ability to make the necessary contacts. That's just one example of dozens where we have helped people with this. To everybody who has anything to do with this and if any of the bankers are listening, thank you for helping our community. I appreciate it and I'm sure everybody involved appreciates it.

Mr. Kaminski – Yes mayor, just to that point, several of the people that we have helped have reached out thanking not only you, but your staff for all the help that you have provided. I did run into an additional businessperson that owns one of the auto places here in town. They're struggling with getting some of the paperwork through; so they may be contacting you as well.

Mr. Schonhut – Thank you mayor to your team and also to Amy and everybody over at The Chamber for getting the word out there on that too.

FINANCE – Mr. DeMio: Thank you so much again, as part of our caucus which also was live earlier, the meeting minutes of the April 27th is incorporated into this council meeting and accepted as is. As time goes on, the mayor, the finance director and i will set a schedule for the next finance meeting in the future; but we're at a hold pat time right until we know more news. Other than that, there is no ordinances or resolutions before this committee. Unless there are questions, I will close the committee.

Mr. Schonhut – Thank you Mr. DeMio, any questions?

(No comments)

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES (cont'd):

PLANNING, ZONING AND ENGINEERING – Mr. Schonhut: We have nothing under that committee tonight. Does anybody have any questions there?

(No comments)

PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH – Mr. Short: Thank you Mr. Schonhut, we have one ordinance tonight, Ordinance No. 2020-071. This is to approve and authorize the filing of an application for financial assistance from the Ohio Attorney General's office in connection with their law enforcement diversion program for 2021 relating to the opioid epidemic. This provides money for Strongsville to form and implement a quick response team to directly assist individuals affected by the opioid crisis and provide such individuals and their families outreach by the police and fire departments. The recommendation there is to suspend and adopt. I will happily take any questions. If not, I will conclude my report.

Mr. Schonhut – Any questions for Mr. Short?

(No comments)

Mr. Schonhut – I would just like to give a quick public shout-out to Officer Greg Driik who works our council meetings. Today, he is at 28 years of service with the Strongsville Police Department. I'm sure many people in the community know Greg in one positive way or another. They're clapping out there for him; so thank you Greg for your continued service.

PUBLIC SERVICE AND CONSERVATION – Mr. Kaminski: There's no report this evening.

Mr. Schonhut – Thank you Mr. Kaminski, any questions for Mr. Kaminski?

(No comments)

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES – Ms. Kosek: We don't have any ordinances or resolutions on the agenda tonight. As everyone is aware, recreation is closed because of the pandemic and we are waiting for direction from the State on how to proceed. We have started to make announcements about what things will be closed for the summer; so those things are unfortunate but I guess they are coming. Matt, you and I had talked about some of the community pools and I wondered if you wanted to speak to that issue.

Mr. Schonhut – Yes, thank you Kelly, I know that me and you talked about it and we hope to get some type of roundtable discussion amongst the HOAs so that they can discuss where they are at. I know Kelly and I will be working on that and I thank Ken Evans from Highpoint for the idea. I had Steve, in your workings with the recreation center, and also Mr. Jamison look into as far as some of the recommendations that are out there as far as these private pools which we have no direct way of telling them what they can and cannot do specifically; but I'll let you guys take it there a little bit of what you figured out for our rec center.

Mr. Jamison – Yes, thank you Mr. Chairman, I would just say initially, that it's not a function of the city to make those decisions. It's essentially up to the State and the County Board of Health to come out with the appropriate regulations and rules and then we can move forward... HOAs can move forward. Even with our own rec center we are waiting for that direction in terms of our indoor pool.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES (cont'd):

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES – Ms. Kosek (cont'd):

Mr. Jamison (cont'd) - I know it's a conundrum for these associations in terms of going forward, but I think they just have to be patient and wait for the proper guidance from the State and County officials to give the proper guidelines to provide for everybody's safety and wellbeing going forward because even though the pools are outside and there are chemicals in it, there's obviously a lot of touchpoints going into and out of the pool and just around the pool area. We really need to wait for the State and county to give us the appropriate guidance going forward, thank you.

Mr. Schonhut – Thank you Mr. Jamison, that's one of those things where they have not, as far as to my knowledge, have not given any clear guidance on as far as what their timeline is on that correct?

Mr. Kilo – No, as of this moment, they really haven't. I know that the governor has continually as he goes through these phases of reopening has established different task forces that will tackle these types of issues; but I don't think that they've done that yet as it relates to this. The only thing that you can maybe look to is maybe some of the States that are currently opening in phases and doing things that are a little bit ahead of schedule of ours for guidance; but the first things that I saw from States such as Georgia and Tennessee were pools weren't even part of the first opening phase of these types of things. It's really hard to say when it's going to be part of this whole process and when it will be as far as on the schedule and then two, what it's going to look like, like what Neal was saying, as far as the regulations from the public health officials and different things like that of what the operation will entail. It's hard to say at this moment.

Mr. Schonhut – Thank you, and I know at times for many of us it's been frustrating as far as some clear understanding of exactly what's going on down there in Columbus and what their plan of attack is here; and I realize that a lot of our HOAs are in that same position now as they decide what to do with their pool; but Ms. Kosek and I, I'm sure, will get some type of roundtable discussion going amongst everybody here this week just to at least allow the HOAs the connect a little bit better and allow you to bounce ideas off of each other as far as what you're doing or not doing. Ms. Kosek?

Ms. Kosek – That is the end of my report, I do not have anything else to add.

Mr. Schonhut – Does anybody else have anything to add in regards to that?

Ms. Roff – I think that's the beauty of this right now.

Mr. Schonhut – Thank you Ms. Roff.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – Mr. Schonhut: We have 3 ordinances on the agenda tonight. Ordinance No. 2020-072 which is going to be placed on first reading. Ordinance No. 2020-073 and Ordinance No. 2020-074, all 3 of these are kind of cleaning up different sections of the Code. Mr. Jamison, could you just briefly...I know we talked about it more in depth in caucus, but just briefly go through those again on the floor here if you would please.

Mr. Jamison – Sure, the first one is basically streamlining the Codified Ordinances to remove certain regulations of industries or practices that really we have not undertaken in some years and were enacted back in the fifties and early sixties. Also, I worked with the clerk of council, who wasn't here before in the caucus, and I want to thank her for her help on the other 2 ordinances in terms of cleaning up as it relates to practices of city council and getting it updated in terms of the proper rules of order; that we're using the proper addition.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES (cont'd):

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – Mr. Schonhut (cont'd):

Mr. Jamison (cont'd) - The other one is about public meetings in terms of notices and other things relating to that...just streamlining and updating it so that it is in conformity with law and practice, thank you.

Mr. Schonhut – Thank you Mr. Jamison, does anybody have any questions, comments, concerns on any of that? Thank you Aimee for all of your hard work as always.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR, DIRECTORS OF DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER OFFICERS:

MAYOR PERCIAK: Thank you Mr. President, just a few notes as far as updates are concerned with the rec center and the senior center. Unfortunately, we haven't received any further guidance from the governor's office as far as the recreation center of the senior center. Mr. Bogre, along with certain members of his staff, and our HR director are working on a plan should we receive the okay to reopen. As soon as we receive that okay, we will get that out to the council and then to the members of the rec center and the senior center. As a result of the senior center and the rec center being closed, we have to suspend all summer activities that are sponsored by the recreation center. We don't want to do that but we don't have a choice. Unfortunately, the staff at the rec center and the senior center are going to be placed on furlough beginning next Monday because we are unable to open up the center and bring the summer activities to all of our families here in the City of Strongsville. We had a meeting with the entire 23 member staff this morning-the HR director, myself and the director at the rec center. We clearly laid out for the staff what is happening and why it's happening. We assured them as soon as we can bring them back so that we can get back to some degree of normalcy here in the City of Strongsville we will bring them back. We are working very closely with them because each one of their situations...obviously, each one of them has their own families, so we've offered some the use of vacation time, if they have extra time, and then others will have to do what they have to do to make sure that they have a way of supporting their families. That all happened today. Until further notice from the governor's office, we really have no choice.

Secondly, we have to be very cognizant as to what the Cuyahoga County Board of Health expects of us. We have to listen to their guidance here and we will follow their guidance. In addition to suspending activities at the rec center and senior center, unfortunately, we have to also suspend our fireworks, our Fourth of July firework's activities. There is no way that we can properly maintain social distancing on the Fourth of July at 10:00 p.m. at the Foltz grounds and anywhere else throughout the city. It's just not doable. I know people said, "Well, the city is making it a financial issue." No, it is not because the business community in the past has always paid for the fireworks; however, with the business community being so impacted this year by this COVID-19 virus, I felt it inappropriate to even write the business community and ask them for donations for our annual fireworks display. Unfortunately, this year we will not be able to schedule the 4th of July fireworks. I also notified the chairman of the annual Homecoming, of the Strongsville Homecoming, that we will be unable to provide the fireworks for the Homecoming like we have in the past. Now, someone has asked me, "Are we going to have a Homecoming?" The answer to that question is I don't know because that is in July. There have been many questions presented to the Homecoming committee as to can they, will they and so much is dependent on the ride company. As I understand it, the ride company will not be able to be up and running until July 1st and that is the most current information I have. As you know, I think the Homecoming begins this year, July 15th or somewhere around there. I don't have an answer for you on the Homecoming at this time. I'm waiting for the general chairman and the co-chairman to get back to me with an answer as far as how the Homecoming may be had or in what fashion it may be.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR, DIRECTORS OF DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER OFFICERS (cont'd):

MAYOR PERCIAK (cont'd): Now, the next thing I've been asked about is The Rib Burnoff. I haven't received any information from The City Club. Again, they are the sponsors of this event. As soon as I receive an answer from them I will let everybody know. Now the other side of both of these events, whether it be The Rib Burnoff, or it be the Homecoming, we have to respect and I don't want to say deal with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, but they are going to have a lot to say about this. We have to understand with the new restrictions that are in place and we have to follow their guidelines. I have received several calls on this. This is not anything we want to do as to not have these events; but the way it stands today and with the guidance that we're receiving today from Columbus and from the different agencies, I really can't report anything else to you. I can't remember a summer ever in the City of Strongsville since I've been here, since 1979, that we haven't had a Homecoming. I don't know what we're going to do but we'll work through it and I just ask for your continued patience.

Another thing I want to talk about...the people in my administration and anybody who has worked so diligently on all of these issues that surround us. I know our finance director, our HR director, our law director, our economic development director, the members of council who have been at my side, this has really been a very trying time. Until we get further definition from the governor's office, we simply sometimes just don't know. As a matter of fact and for the record, you hear it the same way that I do. We receive absolutely zero advance notice from Columbus. We receive printed instructions from Columbus after the fact, not before the fact. Please bear along with us and please understand that we are doing our very best at this time. One last thing, there's all kinds of innuendo out there. Yes, we did have a finance meeting and yes, the city's budget is being impacted because of the lack of income tax receipts. That is a fact and that will not change until all of our people in the City of Strongsville are back to work paying city income taxes. This is going to be a process and we're just going to have to work with the people, work with the businesses until everything is up and running. Thank you for your patience, thank you for working with us, and to everybody up here and ladies to you at home, thank you for your help and assistance; but as you know, this has not been easy on all of you at home or any one of us up here. I know the kids...I feel so bad this year for the kids that are graduating. They don't have a chance to say goodbye. Some of these kids have been together since preschool and they're graduating high school. Yes, they'll text each other and they'll do this and they'll do that but it isn't like saying goodbye. Then they're going to move onto colleges, if they figure how they are going to open in the fall. There are just so many things that aren't right. Our little kids that receive first Holy Communion; we hope that will come in some form or another. All of our church activities, Confirmations, everything is postponed. There are so many things that our families come together and do and enjoy and they are just postponed and put on ice. We can't give any further definition as to when that will happen. Thank you for putting up with all of these inconveniences but we have to do what we have to do. At the end, if we're all healthy and everybody stays healthy and we stay together as a community, it will all be worth it, thank you.

Mr. Schonhut – We thank you mayor, I think we've talked 3-4 times a week since all of this has started. Every time I ask you how you are doing, you say, "Not good." I think it's because you care. You care about everybody that works here, you care about everybody that lives in the community. A lot of these decisions that you and all of us have to make right now are not easy, a lot of them are not popular; but I think a good leader balances emotion and reason and I think you're doing a damn good job at that. This too shall pass. I said that, I think, 2 or 3 meeting ago. We're still here but it shall pass and brighter days are ahead and I know everybody is upset and seeing the fireworks get canceled. Trust us, we never want to make those decisions to do something like that; however, many of those events take a lot of time to plan and a lot of money to make happen. Thank you mayor for leadership during a difficult time.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR, DIRECTORS OF DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER OFFICERS (cont'd):

MAYOR PERCIAK (cont'd):

Mr. Carbone – Matt, I think also in front of St. Joes, “The comeback will always be stronger than the setback.” is appropriate. With everybody working diligently together, it’s going to happen.

Mr. Schonhut – That’s a great quote from our Father Mammich and that sign sprung from somebody near and dear to me. It’s a great quote and I think Father Mammich is here with us tonight in the waiting room; so thank you Father Mammich for that too. Anybody have anything else for the mayor?

Ms. Roff – (Unintelligible)...ditto for that because I cannot imagine all the things, and all the balls in the air and all the things that he has to address...complaints and comments...the whole package...the whole thing. I cannot imagine having to do that on a daily basis. I know just what we get as council people and it’s only a portion of what he probably gets every day; so thank you and thank your administration.

Mayor Perciak – You’re welcome.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT – Mr. Dubovec: Thank you Mr. President, funds are available for all ordinances and resolutions on this evening’s agenda require certification of funding and that will conclude my report, thank you.

LAW DEPARTMENT – Mr. Jamison: All ordinances and resolutions are in proper legal form. That concludes my report.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Mr. Schonhut – That brings us to audience participation. Is there anybody that would like to come and speak? Matt, I know you’ve been here before but especially with Aimee stepping out so that we can stay at our 10 or under rule here, if you could state and spell your name and then give us your address for the record. We ask that you keep comments under 5 minutes. We’ll go from there, go ahead.

Matt Kasza, 17000 Prospect Road, Strongsville, OH: Matt Kasza, 17000 Prospect Road. I am the president of the Strongsville Firefighter’s Association. I am here to talk about our staffing. Over the weekend, on Saturday, we had 2 stations with only 2 guys at it. Yesterday, all 4 stations were operating with 2 guys. There was a memo from the city on April 28th about the phase 1 opening of the State and how it is going to affect the city. We did not receive that memo until May 3rd and I just read it today. There were some things in there that I found important and I wanted to bring up to you guys. It said, “The intent of the city, at this time, is to strive to operate effectively and ensure that all essential services are continuously provided and that employees are safe within the workplace.” Now, we’re not maintaining our minimum staffing, so we are not providing effective services; that’s affecting our operations. Our safety is being affected by that. When we go on calls with 2 man crews, our safety is affected. Then it goes on to say that, “All non-essential overtime will be eliminated.” So, is it of the council and the mayor...are they saying that filling our spots to maintain our minimum manning, that is not essential? Because last time I looked, firefighter/paramedics were essential employees; so basically, that’s telling us that you don’t think our safety is essential; you don’t think the rest of the residents’ safety is essential. I think that it’s appalling that you guys are allowing this to happen. Lastly, on Friday, there was a Cleveland.com article where the mayor made some comments about the firefighters. None of us are happy about it, you portrayed us in a negative light. You made it sound like we were greedy. We just had a meeting last Monday with you. That meeting was cordial; there was no negativity in that meeting.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (cont'd):

Mr. Kasza (cont'd) - Steve, you were in there. We tried to come up with an idea to help this city to maintain the minimum staffing for the fire department. After the meeting with you, we went over to station no. 4 and talked with Chief Draves and Safety Director Goss and we devised a plan to come up with a way that we could meet our minimum staffing and that would help the city financially. Ultimately, it was...you guys rejected that, but in that article, you made us sound horrible. I don't appreciate that at all and none of those guys out there appreciate it.

Mr. Kasza (cont'd) - We're the ones that put our lives on the line every day. I think you owe us an apology for the way you made us look to the public. That's all I have to say. I'm sure you guys have been getting messages all weekend about the staffing; and I hope you guys do something to fix this. I know my councilman, when he was running in November, he said safety was one of his no. 1 issues. He even cited the drop in our man power and the increasing calls; so you guys need to get together and come up with a plan because this is unacceptable, thank you.

Mr. Jamison – Mr. Chairman, if I could, I have a couple of questions for Mr. Kasza. So Mr. Kasza, there was a press release put out on May 2nd, you're aware of this, this press release put out by the Firefighter's Union?

Mr. Kasza – Yes.

Mr. Jamison – And I assume as the president you were aware of it or responsible for doing it, and you authorized it obviously?

Mr. Kasza – Yes.

Mr. Jamison – Help me understand what's going on here, you just heard the mayor and others talk about we're in not only a health and medical crisis, but a financial crisis; I think you would agree with that, correct?

Mr. Kasza – Yes.

Mr. Jamison – And you just heard that some employees already got furloughed, are getting laid off, are going to get pay cuts going forward because we don't know what is going to happen. People aren't working out there, taxes aren't getting paid, and that this is a tough time for everybody. Hopefully, you understand that as we go forward, we're not trying to punish anybody or make it unsafe for anybody, we're trying to make sure that as a team, we work together to try and allow people to work and to work with each other; so I would put it back on you as well, that you and your committee come up with some ideas so that we can do this so that your safety isn't being compromised and that financially, we can do it as well; because it's not just one or the other. Some of us might get our pay cut and you're sitting here telling us no cuts for us, no layoffs, and no furloughs. In fact, by what we proposed, it's going to cost overtime. I get that there's a....

(Gentleman outside chamber saying something inaudible)

Mr. Jamison – Sir, wait your time and act in good order or you'll be asked to leave. So at the end of the day, I ask that you work with us to try and find that solution, that's all I have to say; thank you Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Kasza – We've tried working with you, you guys...

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (cont'd):

Mr. Kilo – Council President, Mr. Schonhut, I just want to reiterate because Matt did say that we did meet a week ago Monday. We had a sit down meeting with the mayor, with Matt, with a couple others, with Mr. Bement from the union, as well as Chief Draves and Safety Director Goss, and we did have a cordial meeting and we did talk about a couple different things that were proposed, that were proposed, and the city did take due diligence in listening to what the firefighters brought as a potential proposal; and I know that Chief Draves and Safety Director Goss met after that meeting again and tried to work out the details of what that proposal could be. The city did listen to it, but again, there's more to it than that. Once we looked into it and we had an opinion given of whether we could go along with that method, it was advised to us that it would not be a legal thing to do and we would be running afoul of FLSA rules and exposing the city and the fire department to issues that we did not want to encounter. It wasn't that you weren't listened to; it was thoroughly divulged and it was thoroughly vetted in every way, shape and form to try to get some resolution to what you guys brought forward. Chief Draves, to his credit, was very steadfast in trying to make it work in some way; but when you're advised that it runs counter to legal abilities or the way it's regarded by the FLSA, we had no choice but not to implement that particular thing that you guys brought forward as a potential answer. I just wanted to dovetail on what Law Director Jamison is saying, that it's not an unwillingness to work with you. I know the mayor said to you guys, in that meeting more than once, he'll meet with you as often as you like, he'll be as transparent as you want. He showed you the number that the city was facing, economically and every day in the receipts that are in the red, every day what the city is losing by not having the income tax receipts coming in; so there hasn't been an unwillingness to sit down with you guys and try to work something out and try to do everything that we could; but you can't implement something that's not legal, thank you.

Mr. Kasza – Well, that was for that particular proposal and our counsel had a different opinion of that. They said it could be done; and I still haven't gotten a response from, a written response from Safety Director Goss about that; but I would like that in writing. To answer Neal Jamison's, the stuff he was saying, yeah- people might be getting laid off, but they can collect unemployment if they get laid off. We're talking about peoples' lives here. You guys are playing a game right now with peoples' lives, okay? Mr. Carbone, you work in North Olmsted, right? Are they cutting staffing over there with the safety forces?

Mr. Carbone – Not at this moment.

Mr. Kasza – Okay.

Mr. Jamison – Mr. Kasza, let me just point out to you, I didn't say we were going to cut safety; I just said...

Mr. Kasza – You are cutting safety. You're letting us drop below minimum manning. Yesterday we had all 4 stations with 2 guys at them. That is unacceptable.

Mr. Jamison – I'll let you finish...I'm sorry.

Ms. Roff – May I ask a question, if I may? As far as the cuts as far as safety forces go, how many people are supposed to be on staff?

Mr. Kasza – Our minimum manning is 13.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (cont'd):

Mr. Kilo – I think the way that they schedule it is they typically on a daily basis, they have the schedule set for 18 people, okay, but they take into account at least 5 per day, that between vacations or Kelly days or other types of days that firefighters receive off, then that drops the number based on the 4 stations to having 13, which would be 3 men at the 4 stations plus an overall captain in charge, is that right?

Mr. Kasza – Yes.

Mr. Schonhut – All right, can we ask this, just if everybody between the administration and the fire union just get together and figure out a way to figure this out one way or another if we could. We know that the way we've done things is paying out overtime to make sure we're at staffing, whether we need to hire part-time help into help in a little bit-whatever we need to do to get us to where we need to be but being financially smart because having people on unemployment also affects their livelihood. As much as we want to keep people safe, being on unemployment for people that are supporting families is a difficult decision for us to make too. So, I just implore both sides of you to just please get together, bring us a feasible, legal solution...whatever it needs to be, that we can figure it out and let's work together because that's what we should be doing here. Let's make it happen.

Mr. Kasza – This is an underlying issue that's been going on for close to a decade; so it's not like it's something new. We've come to you guys in 2015. We gave the city a GIS study, talking about our staffing. You guys all received it in 2016; so let's not act like this is something new, okay? It doesn't answer the question, are you saying that we are not essential?

Mr. Schonhut – I think every department of the entire city is essential.

Mr. Kasza – All right, thank you.

Mr. Jamison – Thank you.

Mr. Schonhut – Aimee, is there anybody else that would like to approach?

(No one)

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Ordinance No. 2020-071 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. AN ORDINANCE APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVERSION PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021 RELATING TO THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC; AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Short to suspend the rules requiring every ordinance or resolution to be read on three different days, second by Mr. DeMio. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Short, second by Mr. DeMio.

Roll Call: All ayes. Motion carries.

Ordinance No. 2020-071 ADOPTED.

Ordinance No. 2020-072 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. AN ORDINANCE REPEALING CHAPTERS 810, 844, 846, 864, 870, 872, AND CHAPTER 874 OF TITLE TWO OF PART EIGHT BUSINESS REGULATION AND TAXATION CODE IN ORDER TO UPDATE THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF STRONGSVILLE.

Placed on first reading and referred back to the committee.

Ordinance No. 2020-073 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 208 OF TITLE TWO OF PART TWO-ADMINISTRATION CODE OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF STRONGSVILLE CONCERNING PUBLIC MEETINGS.

Motion by Mr. Short to suspend the rules requiring every ordinance or resolution to be read on three different days, second by Mr. DeMio. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Short, second by Mr. DeMio.

Roll Call: All ayes. Motion carries. Ordinance No. 2020-073 ADOPTED.

Ordinance No. 2020-074 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 220.02(g) AND (i) OF TITLE FOUR OF PART TWO-ADMINISTRATION CODE; AND AMENDING SECTION 230.04 OF TITLE SIX OF PART TWO-ADMINISTRATION CODE, IN ORDER TO UPDATE THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF STRONGSVILLE.

Motion by Mr. Short to suspend the rules requiring every ordinance or resolution to be read on three different days, second by Mr. DeMio. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Short, second by Mr. DeMio.

Roll Call: All ayes. Motion carries. Ordinance No. 2020-074 ADOPTED.

COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS AND CLAIMS:

(None)

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Mr. Schonhut – Any miscellaneous business”

Mr. Short made a motion to adjourn into executive session for the purpose of discussing pending and imminent litigation matters. It was seconded by Mr. DeMio to adjourn from open session into executive session [Article XI, Section 9, City Charter]. All members present voted aye and the motion carried. Council adjourned into executive session at 8:50 p.m. Also present from the Administration: Mayor Perciak and Law Director Neal Jamison. The executive session concluded at 9:45 p.m. and reconvened into open session.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before this Council, President Schonhut adjourned the meeting at 9:46 p.m.



Aimee Pientka, MMC
Clerk of Council



Date