

CITY COMMISSION

WORK SESSION MINUTES

December 10, 2019

6:15 p.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners Chilton, Estrop, O'Neill, Rue and President Copeland. City Manager Heck

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS:

Topics discussed at the work session held on Tuesday, December 10, 2019, were:

1. City Manager Heck presented an update to the City Commission on the promises made to the Springfield citizens related to the income tax levy passed in May 2017. Collection of the additional 0.4 percent income tax began on July 1, 2017, for a period of five and one-half years. Staff has prepared a public education campaign to share with citizens on the progress made due to the additional funding. Mr. Heck reminded commissioners of the city's financial struggles prior to the levy passage due to Local Government Fund reductions totaling \$21.5 million over a ten-year period. The commission and city staff cut expenses and kept spending flat for many years. A third-party performance audit and a local financial advisory group agreed that a levy was necessary to avoid a financial crisis.

Mr. Heck reviewed the promises made and the progress made. The Police Substation was reopened immediately following passage of the levy which is used by the Police Division and the neighborhood for community events. Bike Camp and the Citizen's Police Academy were both reinstated plus six additional officers were added the Safe Streets Task Force to combat violent crime and drug use. Fire Station #5 and one Fire/EMS Unit was reinstated following the levy and five new ambulances were purchased using a local manufacturer. Additional fire equipment was purchased replacing aging technology including carbon monoxide detectors that are credited to saving over 100 lives in one housing complex.

An additional levy promise was neighborhood street improvements. The city has earmarked \$2 million per year for streets not eligible for federal and state funding. Some street repairs began in 2017 with 27 streets upgraded since 2018.

Mr. Copeland stated his gratitude to city staff members who did not receive pay raises for nearly four years. Mr. Copeland also commented on the Ohio Mayors Association's efforts to encourage the return of state funding.

Dr. Estrop thanked the community partners who helped with the levy campaign. He indicated that the Local Government Fund has not returned to its former levels, but he stated the fuel tax revenue is helpful.

Mrs. Chilton asked about collaboration with the utility companies where street repairs are planned. Mr. Heck explained that staff notifies the utility companies several years in advance of a street project so efforts are coordinated. However, one neighborhood street project was halted due to Columbia Gas changing their plans.

Dr. Estrop asked if neighborhood meetings would continue to gather input on street repairs. Mr. Heck indicated that the projects for the next several years are already in place following neighborhood meetings. Staff will hold additional meetings for projects planned beyond 2022. Mr. Rue added the neighborhood meetings were positive for residents to share their input. Mr. Copeland also commented that many residents were willing to suggest areas that were not their own.

Dr. Estrop thanked the commissioners who were in office in 2017 and prior for working on the levy campaign and making difficult decisions for the citizens. Mr. O'Neill added that commissioners had to make the tough decisions that were difficult to make. Mr. Copeland also thanked former City Manager Jim Bodenmiller for his leadership during the difficult times.

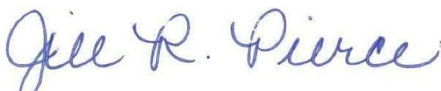
2. On motion of Dr. Estrop, seconded by Mr. Rue, the meeting adjourned.

Yeas, Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue and Mr. Copeland.

Yeas 5, Nays 0.

Adj. 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jill R. Pierce
Clerk of the City Commission