

**FRANKLIN CITY COUNCIL
APRIL 21, 2014**

Members of the Franklin City Council met in regular session on Monday, April 21, 2014, 6:00 p.m. at the Franklin City Building, Mayor Denny Centers presiding.

Roll call showed:

Scott Lipps	present
Matt Wilcher	present
Jason Faulkner	present
Denny Centers	present
Carl Bray	present
Michael Aldridge	present
Todd Hall	present

There were 2 members of the press and 8 visitors at tonight's meeting. Also present: Ms. Donnette Fisher, Law Director; Mr. Jonathan Westendorf, Fire Chief; Mr. Russ Whitman, Police Chief; Mr. Ross Coulton, Assistant Safety Director; Mr. Sonny Lewis, City Manager and Mrs. Jane McGee, Clerk of Council.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Brad Nicely.

Mr. Bray made the motion to approve the Clerk's Journal and accept the tapes as the official minutes of the April 7, 2014 regular meeting; seconded by Mr. Aldridge. The vote:

Mr. Wilcher	yes
Mr. Faulkner	yes
Mr. Centers	yes
Mr. Bray	yes
Mr. Aldridge	yes
Mr. Hall	yes
Mr. Lipps	yes

Motion passed.

RECEPTION OF VISITORS

Mayor Centers recognized Brad Nicely and his mother, who are in the audience tonight. Brad is a Boy Scout working on his citizenship badge.

PROCLAMATION "STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT WEEK"

Mayor Centers, on behalf of Council, presented a proclamation to Jana Bellamy, Franklin City School Treasurer, proclaiming Student Achievement Week, April 27 thru May 3, 2014 in the City of Franklin.

WORK SESSION

Mayor Centers stated that Council is changing the format of their meetings, to include a work session at the 2nd meeting of the month. Council wants to be proactive instead of reacting to issues in the City.

Parks

Mayor Centers stated that the Comprehensive Plan calls for additional park land in the City. We are working on a Joint Park District with Springboro and a possible purchase of land a park. Mayor Centers added an executive session may be needed to talk about a specific purchase and the offer presented to the City.

Mr. Lewis gave an update on the Joint Park District with Springboro:

- A RFQ for design has been awarded by the Joint Park District, for the park on Lower Springboro Road
- The Park Board appointed Betsy Westendorf and Ron Simpson as our representatives on the Joint Park Board
- He will be meeting with Chris Pozzuto, City of Springboro, and the Company to get the specifics and then will meet with the Joint Park Board
- Nothing has been done yet & will keep you informed on what's happening

There was discussion on the need for Ben Huffman, Warren County Park District, to be involved, for marketing; how many acres, who bought the land, any city costs and what are we getting out of it. Mr. Lewis responded it includes 101 acres; the land is in the City of Franklin & Springboro purchased the land; talks just started a year ago; hope to have shelters; 1 or 2 dog parks; additional fields, which could free-up some areas of the Community Park and help with parking; we provide fire/ems service to this area; lacrosse fields possibility; opportunities for both communities; working with Chris Thompson, Springboro City Manager; study cost is our only cost; opportunities for both communities; need to try and do and it will make our park system better.

Mayor Centers asked if we are going to extend Scholl Road. Mr. Lewis stated no, it is private land; might be something we look at in the future - an additional access.

Mr. Bray asked if there are any other park options besides by Hampton Bennett. Mr. Centers stated there could be others. Mr. Lewis stated there are 18 acres by the school, may want to partner with schools on this parcel. Mayor Centers asked about the possibility of bridges – walkway over SR 123 and the creek. Mayor Centers added we had the opportunity to buy the par 3 golf course and didn't – someone will buy this property.

Mr. Faulkner asked if there is any use for Eichholz Park. Mr. Lewis stated we sold some of the land to Warren County for their water tower; about 30 acres remaining and Warren County has said they would like to buy more land. He added he could see playground equipment and a walking trail in that area. We will need to check the deed for any restrictions. Mayor Centers added maybe a dog park, archery, etc could be put there. Mr. Lewis stated that maybe we should have the County look at the area and give us a plan for parks. Mr. Wilcher stated we should also partner with the Township for the 18 acre parcel on 6th Street. Mr. Lewis added we should also partner with the Schools. Mayor Centers stated that the well fields are also an option. Consensus of Council is to focus on the 18 acre parcel and the Joint Park with Springboro. Mr. Lewis stated he will keep Council informed on the Joint Park.

Finance Director Position

Mr. Faulkner stated that Ms. Morgan indicated in her review that she will retire March 15th of next year. We need to be proactive in her replacement. Mr. Faulkner added she is doing a good job.

Mayor Centers asked if we need to do a professional search. Mr. Lewis stated he didn't know and will get information.

Mr. Bray added he will confirm the date with Ms. Morgan. Mr. Lewis stated he confirmed the date with her today; the March date is beneficial to the City, target is to hire by the first of year and they will need Ohio experience.

Combating Drug Issues in the City

Mayor Centers asked what are we doing in the City.

Chief Whitman stated in response to the article that was in the newspaper today: we have no one working with the DEA, wrong in the newspaper; sounds like we have all the drug issues and Springboro none, not the case; drug dealers are not coming to Franklin, have changed how they do things, locals are bringing it into the City; we are working with area agencies; and it is an ever changing problem;

Mr. Wilcher asked how the Warren County Drug Task Force works. Chief Whitman explained we have one person on it; do reap the rewards of the task force; takes longer than our street force; we communicate and work with them.

Mr. Faulkner asked if there are any issues faced with prosecution. Chief Whitman stated it takes 4-6 weeks for lab testing; then the defense wants testing and then there can be independent testing; need more than a trace amount because of the testing.

Mr. Centers asked about the drugs being used – better today? Chief Whitman stated heroin is the drug of choice now; think is better today; unknown today is the quality of the heroin; meth is stronger and more violent than the heroin, think this will be the drug of choice in the future.

Mayor Centers asked what we can do to help you.

Chief Whitman stated to bear with us – we keep changing to keep up with them.

Mayor Centers stated manpower is important and to let us know if additional manpower is needed.

Chief Whitman stated that the department is okay for now – have 4 employees on sick leave, need to get everybody back healthy.

Mr. Faulkner stated he's willing to hire additional manpower as there are going to be a number of retirements happening in the near future – need a plan for their replacements.

Chief Whitman stated he will talk with Mr. Lewis and get a plan as there are several who will be able to retire in the near future.

Mr. Wilcher stated we need a plan – need to look at.

Mr. Lipps stated we need Judge Ruppert and the County on board with us.

Mr. Bray stated he needs to see more facts on it – if arrested and then let out, what good does it do.

Mr. Aldridge stated need to arrest all you can.

Discussion continued.

Mayor Centers stated he agrees with Mr. Aldridge, can't quit arresting, and need to keep after it.

Mr. Bray stated heroin is everywhere – you say dealers aren't here, need to go after those on streets.

Mr. Hall stated it's everywhere, not just here – we are all fighting the same battle.

Chief Whitman stated we are keeping the pressure on it.

Mr. Bray stated there was an OVI checkpoint this past weekend, several officers were there; thought it was a waste of money, let's do that for heroin. Chief Whitman stated that's what we're doing on the streets.

Mr. Aldridge stated you need to let us know what you need and he would like to see an officer downtown all the time – that's a priority for him.

Mr. Wilcher stated he doesn't know if all the money can get rid of it – surprised by the demand of it.

Mr. Hall stated education is the only fix.

Discussion continued on what the heroin is being cut with; drug arrest information needed; need to secure our borders and a plan for more manpower is needed. Chief Whitman added that there is no accountability by the government – education is needed.

Mr. Lewis stated we will never get rid of the demand. The Chief said it is better than a year ago; downtown is better than a year ago; have stopped a lot of the drugs coming into the City; he had a plan, Police Department has done a great job with the resources we have; are better off than a year ago; and we have spent extra money on overtime.

Mayor Centers stated we want him to know we want to do whatever we can to help. Mr. Wilcher added we know we don't hear everything that is good – only the bad.

Other Items

Mayor Centers proceeded with a recap of the February 1, 2014 Goal Setting Session.

Mr. Lewis addressed the following:

- Radio Remotes – just passed the resolution authorizing the purchase
- Dispatch Center – working on, will be coming to Council
- 1TIP – having success with the program
- Easter Egg Hunt – Mr. Bray stated it was good event this year, packed
- Fall Fest , no more political booths – after some discussion consensus of Council is to leave it up to Special Events Committee to make a decision on
- Fireworks – Mr. Bray stated this has been to the Finance Committee, no fireworks this year as there's not enough time to get everything ready; will have next year
- Outdoor Movie Night – looking at having the 1st Friday of the month to begin in June, July & August, not confirmed yet; want to have a family night at the Park, maybe even at the area Schools
- Farmer's Market – have 3 vendors committed; 6/14/14 thru 9/27/14; 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the City Building; John Ramos Food truck will be there every other Saturday
- Downtown, Facade updates – need to do something, but not at that point yet, will be looking at possible funding

Mayor Centers stated the remainder of the items will be discussed at the next work session

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

None tonight.

LAW DIRECTOR'S REPORT

None tonight.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Hall stated he's glad to see the proclamation for the Schools on the agenda tonight, need to partner with the Schools as they have land at the other Schools; and the levy needs passed, if it fails it will hurt the kids and the City.

Mr. Aldridge thanked everyone for coming tonight; the Vineyards Easter Service was held at the High School, it was packed, first time he has attended, Chuck is a great asset to the City.

Mr. Bray stated he talked to Ms. Fisher about Carlos's building downtown – it's been sold and a Church is in there, giving out free food, not happy with the use of the building in the downtown; talked to Ed Dameron, about the Purple Heart signs for the City, he said we have to buy them; and at the SR 123/I-75 ramp, the landscaping has slipped, needs fixed (will be taken care of).

Mr. Lipps thanked the Nicely's for attending tonight – good luck to Brad; great job by Chief Whitman at the Chamber meeting today; and the neighborhood schools, we're trying to save with the levy.

Mr. Wilcher thanked everyone for coming tonight; Franklin is a great place to live and will continue to be, negatives always outweigh the positive – lots of good things

Mr. Faulkner thanked everyone for coming tonight; congrats to Brad Nicely; and vote for the levy & call 10 people to vote for it.

Mr. Centers stated to remember to vote; Chief Whitman and he walked the streets handing out 1TIP info, lots of support and surprised by the people who know the Chief; elderly housing came up at the Historical Society meeting; he'll be out of town 5/5/14 & 5/19/14; people are coming back to Franklin, amazed at the progress due to a great staff & Council; talked to Mayor Agenbroad about a joint beautification project at SR 73/I-75; asked if the School owns the land by Gerke School (yes), need to talk with the them about a possible park; any progress on painting the windows downtown and a short executive session is needed to discuss land acquisition with no action afterwards.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Faulkner made the motion to enter into executive session to discuss property acquisition, with no action afterwards; seconded by Mr. Wilcher. The vote:

Mr. Faulkner	yes
Mr. Centers	yes
Mr. Bray	yes
Mr. Aldridge	yes
Mr. Hall	no
Mr. Lipps	no
Mr. Wilcher	yes

Motion passed.

Mayor Centers and Council entered into executive session to discuss land acquisition, with no action afterwards, at 7:55 p.m.

Mayor Centers and Council exited the executive session; Mayor Centers reconvened and adjourned the meeting.

Vice Mayor

City Clerk