



A regular meeting of Wickliffe City Council was called to order by Council President Levon on Monday, March 11, 2024 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers at Wickliffe City Hall following the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following were present at **Roll Call**:

Council President
Council Members
Mayor
Law Director
Finance Director
Engineer
Service Director
Building Commissioner
Recreation Director
Police Chief
Fire Chief

Edward Levon
Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Salotto, Thielman
Joseph Sakacs
Jeremy D. Iosue
Chlondra Hunter
Peter J. Formica
Ron Strauser
Raymond Sack
Timothy Stopp
Jonathon Bush
Christopher Grossman

Excused:

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, that the minutes of the Wickliffe City Council Meeting of February 26, 2024 be approved as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **February 26, 2024 meeting minutes approved.**

Reports and Communications from Mayor/Safety Director

Mayor Sakacs read his written report.

Councilperson Salotto inquired regarding the amount for the Local Government Fund. Finance Director Hunter noted she has begun looking at what was "left over" at the end of 2023 and what we could potentially cut without having to cut salaries. She will speak with the department heads of Police, Fire, and Service to make a plan. The Mayor noted it might be 400,000 – 500,00 over a seven year period. He is hoping it is not going to be as bad as he thinks it might be.

Councilperson Jaworski also inquired about the amount, asking if it would be the same over the years or if it would increase or stay the same. The Mayor noted it is only what we think we can "lose". He also mentioned a rollover fund that will build up and be divided between the cities. He asked if Councilperson Thielman might have anything to add as Mayor Fiala is "leading the charge" for the western cities. Mayor Sakacs noted we [Wickliffe] houses the Haz-Mat truck, and that could stop. Mr. Jaworski asked if Wickliffe is the city that stands to lose the most, or if it is a different city. The Mayor noted we are about the same as Willowick and Eastlake. He also noted a few of the other cities and villages are standing behind us and will ask that the current formula stay as it is, since we help to keep the other cities safer as "front line defenders".

Councilperson Gerhardstein asked for clarification, noting that some of the other townships don't pay income tax and do not have safety levies; they don't pay in, but want the money that Wickliffe gets, yet our residents are paying for safety services.

Councilperson Salotto asked why our [tax] burden might be higher than Willoughby or Mentor. Councilperson Thielman noted an algorithm that was created in 1982 to "divvy" up State funds that come to the County. It is a very complex formula that was beneficial to western Lake County. Someone noted that other counties use a population-based formula to divide funds. Wickliffe's population is lower (than other cities), so others win, while we and other smaller cities lose. Some of the townships gain, but on a very small scale. The seven-year timeframe is to ease all into the population-based formula, so it is not a huge "hit" all at one time. We will also be hoping the Local Government Fund will increase, as it is slowly growing after being slashed years ago by then Governor Kasich.

Council President Levon asked for confirmation on the State of the City – that it will be April 10th at 6:30PM, and Mayor Sakacs confirmed this.

Reports and Communications from Director of Law

Law Director Iosue had no report.

Reports and Communications from Council President

Council President Levon had no report.

Additions or Amendments to Agenda

Council President Levon added Executive Session to discuss Complaints Against a Public Employee as Item Number 18 to tonight's agenda and moved Adjournment to Number 19.

Council President Levon added Wickliffe City School District Property Rezoning to New Business as Item A.

Administrators

A. Police Chief (Bush)

Chief Bush was excused.

There were no questions or comments for the Police Chief.

B. Fire Chief (Grossman) Written Report Submitted

Chief Grossman had nothing to add to his written report.

Councilperson Bala inquired if there was any news regarding plans for the Fire Station. Chief Grossman stated they took some comments and also contacted the Lake County Building Department to see if anything would fall under their prevue, and they are waiting to hear back.

There were no further questions or comments for the Fire Chief.

C. Finance Director (Hunter) Written Report Submitted

Finance Director Hunter noted February is closed and the General Fund Carryover Balance is approximately \$7.9 Million.

Councilperson Gerhardstein inquired regarding the finance report, noting the Storefront Renovation program is already "maxed out", noting it has all been encumbered for 2024. Ms. Hunter responded this was from last year's program – there were several grants that were not issued and POs were "pulled forward" and that is what is in the report. Mr. Gerhardstein thanked Ms. Hunter for the clarification.

There were no further questions or comments for the Finance Director.

D. Engineer (Formica) Written Report Submitted

Engineer Formica added bids were opened for the Drenik Drive sewer lining project, but he does not have a report for Council yet. He is looking into the company that had the lowest bid, as he has never worked with them. He noted they are out of Indiana. He has heard many good things, but is doing due diligence, and will have a report at the next meeting.

Councilperson Jaworski asked if there were any updates on the Rockefeller Road intersection project. Mr. Formica noted it was supposed to begin around March 1st, but he does not have information on this as there has not been a Pre-Con[struction meeting] called yet.

Councilperson Gerhardstein asked about the progress of East 296th Street project. Mr. Formica noted it is going well and that he and Service Director Strauser have a meeting there tomorrow at 8 AM to discuss paving operations and curbs and sidewalks.

There were no further questions or comments for the Engineer.

E. Service Director (Strauser) Written Report Submitted

Service Director Strauser noted some good news is that the pool heater is in and installed. He stated they will still have to do final adjustments, but not until the pool is filled. He also noted Dominion East Ohio will be starting a large project on Euclid Avenue where they will be replacing the gas lines from Bellview to Empire. Most of it is a boring project, but it will be going back and forth across the street. He and the Engineer will have a pre-con for this soon. The project will begin April 1st. He noted there is a possibility of interference regarding the Memorial Day Parade, but Dominion has assured the City they will be past Mt. Carmel by that time, or at least have the area replaced with temporary backfill.

Councilperson Jaworski asked if the Dominion project would entail digging up the road or sidewalk. Mr. Strauser noted they definitely will. Mr. Jaworski asked if they will be responsible to replace everything to our standards, and Mr. Strauser noted that is correct.

Councilperson Thielman asked if this would be similar to what was done on Lloyd Road last year and Mr. Strauser noted it is. Mr. Thielman noted there was a similar project on Vine Street, noting there was additional concrete work that was provided to the City during the project.

Councilperson Jaworski asked where the gas mains are on Euclid Avenue. Mr. Formica noted they are under the sidewalks on both sides.

Councilperson Bala inquired regarding storage of salt, asking if it would be feasible to have a temporary structure. Mr. Strauser noted he has a call in to the EPA, as there are restrictions. He is waiting to hear back. He noted it is one option. He noted another option is to pay Morton to store it for us. He noted he is considering many things, adding we will likely be in excess of one thousand tons that we will not be able to house. He noted there are not funds to buy the "hoop housing", so if that is what is needed, he will have to come back to Council for approval. This may be a possibility for a temporary solution, but will not be feasible as a permanent solution due to EPA regulations. Mr. Bala asked how far back the property goes at the Lakeland Service Garage. Mr. Strauser noted it does not go all the way to the tracks – First Energy rents it to a construction company. He noted there is room on our property.

Councilperson Gerhardstein asked if when Mr. Strauser speaks to the EPA, he works with them and the Building Department to be sure that any other Wickliffe company that has a temporary salt structure is also following the correct guidelines. Mr. Strauser noted he will.

There were no further questions or comments for the Service Director.

F. *Building Commissioner (Sack)* Written Report Submitted

Building Commissioner Sack was excused.

There were no questions or comments for the Building Commissioner.

G. *Recreation Director (Stopp)* Written Report Submitted

Recreation Director was excused.

There were no questions or comments for the Recreation Director.

Audience Participation

Council President Levon opened Audience Participation to those in attendance at 7:21 PM.

He noted this portion of the meeting is intended for the audience to address the Council and Mayor, not the directors. Anyone wishing to address Council must be acknowledged and give their name and address for the clerk's record and will be given a five minute maximum for their comments.

Dan Bishop of 28841 Ridge Road noted the Mayor had never driven the Tahoe for personal use. He asked if he had ever driven it to Pennsylvania. The Mayor responded that last year as he was investigating funds for an amphitheater, he went to Pittsburgh to research and look at a few of the seventeen located there. He noted he thought this might come up, as there were tolls, but not ones he could pay cash for, so when the bill came, he paid for it with his personal credit card, and filled up his gas once "on his own dime". He noted he does not have a city credit card. Mr. Bishop noted the Mayor has previously stated he had never taken that vehicle out of state. The Mayor noted he meant for personal use, and this was city-related. He assured Mr. Bishop that moving forward he is being more careful. He noted back in the seventies, the Mayors were issued a city vehicle that they could use for their other job – they could take it to work or for personal use. It had always been like that. He noted he has spoken with the Law Director, and he does not want to use it to get himself into trouble. The Law Director told him to use it as less as possible. He noted sometimes he takes it to his other job, but then he comes here, it is part of his commute. He noted he is doing his best. Mr. Bishop noted the records he has and what he is digging up do not add up to what the Mayor said previously. The Mayor noted one of the things was the gas – noting he was told by the Service Director that when he punches in his mileage for the gas that he did not need to be accurate, as it is not an official log, rather it is used to track when vehicles require an oil change. He noted the official log is the mileage from when he was given the car. Mr. Bishop noted it is an excessive amount of mileage, and the mayor noted it is below the average. They Mayor noted he goes a lot of places for the City of Wickliffe. He noted some feel he is a part-time mayor and should stick to that, but he has said he will be a full-time mayor and he is here every day doing something for the City because there is no other way we will move

forward. He assured Mr. Bishop he is doing the best he can. Mr. Bishop noted he is just doing his homework.

Dale Mueller of 1536 East 300th Street, reference the Biggby at 290th and Euclid has had food trucks there. He asked if this was allowed or if permits are necessary. He noted this was last week and again this week, referencing an ad on his phone. Mayor Sakacs noted he was approached by the Building Commissioner. He noted the business [Biggby] was slow and asked if it would be okay to have food trucks. They Mayor said he would do whatever he could to help a business, but instructed him [Mr. Sack] to check with the Ward Councilman to see if it would be okay. He also noted we have outdated ordinances that are from 1984 that reference food carts. He also noted he is speaking with the Law Director as many of our community events have food trucks, so we have to amend it [the ordinance]. Mr. Mueller asked if this would continue on a weekly basis, as it will take away from businesses here in the City. He also mentioned he saw two there at one time, and wondered if it would be a full parking lot this summer. The Mayor thought it was a one-time thing and did not know it would be on a regular basis, and that it will be handled soon. Mr. Mueller noted once in a while would be fine, but not on a regular basis.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted he wanted clarity, noting the Mayor stated “talk to the ward councilman”. He noted he is the ward councilman, and he was informed that the Mayor and he [the Building Commissioner] allowed the food truck there even though it was against the ordinance. He noted he was not approached and asked, rather it was stated a food truck was allowed and it was against the ordinance that we have. The Mayor noted this was a miscommunication. Mr. Gerhardstein noted what he was told and what the Mayor was told are two different things. He wished that all understand that he did not say that he was okay with this. They Mayor noted it will be handled tomorrow.

Councilperson Koski noted she is in favor of looking at these ordinances and allowing things such as this since there is really nothing going on on Euclid Avenue, and the restaurants are not always open at the same times the food truck are there. She also noted this is bringing business to a new area of town. Mayor Sakacs noted his thought process was that he didn’t want Wickliffe to be the first place a Biggby has ever failed. He noted a business is coming where the Roll House was and that should boost things. He noted the owner was thinking outside the box, and he didn’t have a problem with it, but didn’t think it would be every week two or three times a week.

Councilperson Jaworski noted he has a significant concern, noting in the past Wickliffe has favored some businesses over others, and stated we should not be doing that. He said there should be no preference given to any business if it’s not given to all of them. He noted it is not fair nor appropriate.

Councilperson Koski noted this is why she said she thinks it is necessary to revisit and see what changes need to be made.

Councilperson Thielman noted he believes we should allow food trucks to some degree. He was looking forward to the lobster truck. He noted it would give him the opportunity to go to Biggby. He also thought this would be a nice lot for a food truck park. He noted Beachwood took the former Fire Station and turned it into a food truck park which is highly successful. He also noted Lakewood has one and Willoughby has a small one. He noted food trucks are big now. He thinks we should embrace it, as it will not compete with local businesses, and would like to look at expanding the use of food trucks in the City. He agreed with Councilperson Koski that there is not much going on on Euclid Avenue. He noted slamming this is ridiculous on many levels, with all due respect.

Mr. Mueller noted he was not slamming them, but stated it is starting a trend. He asked how many would be there at one time and wanted to know why we would want a food truck park, noting it would not go over well in this City.

Councilperson Thielman noted this would be the purpose of regulating them with regard to hours of operation, days of the week, etc. He stated many communities struggle with this. He noted it was thought that there would never be food truck in downtown Willoughby, as it would hurt the restaurants, but the restaurant owners started food trucks themselves and embrace it. He noted he would like to see an ordinance that allows it, but noted that is his opinion and he is one of seven.

Council President Levon noted Mr. Mueller was right that this is against the ordinance and we need to look at the ordinance and revamp it. He stated discussing this now makes no sense, as it should be discussed in committee. Mr. Mueller agreed.

Councilperson Bala noted if this is on social media and it comes up as Wickliffe Food Trucks Cancelled – Not Allowed could easily happen. He also noted there are so many other problems in the City and we are talking about a food truck.

Councilperson Salotto noted the proper ordinances need to be in place as there are bona fide businesses that pay taxes in the City, and we should take that into consideration as the food trucks do not pay taxes. She noted we should talk about the ordinance as it does affect our businesses and citizens and thinks it should be added to a committee as soon as possible.

Councilperson Thielman noted we need “a vibe” as we do not have much of a vibe here. Councilperson Salotto agreed.

After multiple calls inquiring if anyone would like to address Wickliffe City Council and there being no reply, Council President Levon closed Audience Participation at 7:34PM.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes (March 4, 2024 meeting) presented by Council President Levon

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes (March 4, 2024 meeting) presented by Council President Levon

Motion by Levon, seconded by Jaworski, to authorize the Law Director to modify Chapter 1305 based on the Planning Commission's recommendations and the Committee of the Whole modifications.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried.

Commission Reports

With regard to the March 7th, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting, Councilperson Jaworski reported the commission approved a parking plan for an entertainment arcade located at 30436 Euclid Avenue in a General Business district. He noted the commission also heard from James Hunley regarding a request for rezoning from Town Center to RMS Residential Multi-Family located at the rear of parcel 29-A-003-000-27-0 and approved that as such. The Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing for the back portion of that parcel for Sunset Development at the April meeting.

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

New Business

A. Wickliffe City School District Property Rezoning

Council President Levon noted there was a Public Hearing last week for the rezoning of the School District's property. He noted the recommendation was to be R1-60 for all the residential lots and General Business on Euclid Avenue. He added this topic to the Committee of the Whole for a quick discussion to finalize it before creating the ordinance.

Ordinances

OR 2024-05 *By Title Only* An ordinance enacting Chapter 1152 Nuisance Abatement of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio **THIRD READING**

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, that Ordinance 2024-05 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2024-05 adopted.**

OR 2024-10 AMENDED *By Title Only* An ordinance providing appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio for the period beginning January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024 **SECOND READING**

OR 2024-11 *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation of appointed officials of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **SECOND READING**

OR 2024-12 *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation of certain salaried and hourly employees of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **SECOND READING**

OR 2024-13 *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation and other employment provisions for special police officers of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **SECOND READING**

OR 2024-14 *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation and other employment provisions for the part-time public safety dispatchers of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **SECOND READING**

OR 2024-16 *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation of certain employees of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **SECOND READING**

OR 2024-17 *By Title Only* An ordinance amending certain sections of Chapter 1369 – Requirements for Improvements, Reservations, and Design of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio **SECOND READING**

Resolutions

RES 2024-03 *By Title Only* A resolution expressing unwavering support and sympathy for the innocent civilians experiencing violence in Israel and Palestine being Muslim, Jewish, and Christian and condemning all violence of any kind; affirming Wickliffe's status as a welcoming community for any religion; encouraging residents to decry any and all acts of violence both in our communities and around the globe, and express their deepest condolences to all those affected by the atrocities of the war on Gaza **FIRST READING**

Other Legislation

There was no Other Legislation.

Miscellaneous

Councilperson Gerhardstein wished to clarify that the rezoning for multi-family that Councilperson Jaworski mentioned earlier is in regard to the old Ponderosa property.

Councilperson Thielman noted with regard to Resolution 2024-03, asked if there would be discussion on this. Councilperson Levon noted it could be discussed on the third reading. Councilperson Salotto asked who wrote the resolution. Councilperson Koski noted she took three different resolutions passed and combined them. She noted there is nothing inflammatory or accusatory, rather it is strictly humanitarian aid calling for a cease-fire and allowing for supplies to be allowed into the area for civilians that are not fighting the war. She added it is a catastrophe there and basic necessities are needed to prevent additional deaths. She described other situations that are occurring there. She stated over seventy cities have passed resolutions and noted this would add a voice to what many view as something that shouldn't be happening. Councilperson Thielman noted he would be happy to share his issues with the resolution; noting some of them are semantics. He also noted we have Telshe Yeshiva here, and that the Cleveland Jewish Federation has suggested that councils don't pass any resolutions. He added many communities across the country have not passed or have defeated legislation as have passed them. Ms. Koski noted she spoke with Rabbi Wolf on the phone and sent it to him. Mr. Thielman noted he would share his thoughts. Ms. Koski was fine with this. Mr. Levon noted if Ms. Koski wished to modify it, it could be put back on first reading. Mr. Thielman noted it could be amended, and Mr. Levon agreed. Mr. Levon noted both he and the Law Director advised Ms. Koski to start it in committee, but she wished to put it out as it was.

Councilperson Levon reminded all that there was an Economic Development/Euclid Avenue Re-Development Committee meeting called for at the previous (February 26th, 2024) Council Meeting to discuss Chapter 1313 of the Codified Ordinances.

He then called for a meeting of the Finance Committee that same evening immediately following the Economic Development/Euclid Avenue Re-Development Committee meeting to discuss OR2024-15 and also a meeting of the Committee of the Whole that same evening immediately following the Finance Committee meeting to discuss the Wickliffe City School District Property Rezoning.

Adjournment

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, to adjourn the meeting to Executive Session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(1) to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official, or **the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee**, official, licensee, or regulated individual, unless the public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual requests a public hearing. Except as otherwise provided by law, no public body shall hold an executive session for the discipline of an elected official for conduct related to the performance of the elected official's official duties or for the elected official's removal from office. If a public body holds an executive session pursuant to division (G)(1) of this section, the motion and vote to hold that executive session shall state which one or more of the approved purposes listed in division (G)(1) of this section are the purposes for which the executive session is to be held, but need not include the name of any person to be considered at the meeting. The Executive Session will commence following a five minute break.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. Meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 7:55 PM.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Bala, to reconvene the meeting from Executive Session.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. Meeting reconvened at 8:33 PM.


Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.


Clerk of Council
Council President and Presiding Officer