



A regular meeting of Wickliffe City Council was called to order by Council President Ed Levon on Monday, April 8, 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, Koski, Salotto, Thielman  
Joseph Sakacs  
Jeremy D. Iosue  
Chlondra Hunter  
Peter J. Formica  
Ron Strauser  
Raymond Sack  
Timothy Stopp  
Jonathon Bush  
Christopher Grossman

Excused: Councilperson Jaworski

### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Koski, that the minutes of the Wickliffe City Council Meeting of April 8, 2024 be approved as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. **April 8, 2024 meeting minutes approved.**

### **Reports and Communications from Mayor/Safety Director**

Mayor Sakacs read his written report.

There were no questions for the Mayor.

### **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**

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda.

### **Administrators**

#### **A. Police Chief (Bush) Written Report Submitted**

Chief Bush conveyed the bad news that one of the lateral transfers resigned this week. His previous employer recruited him back with a monetary incentive. He was not eligible for the signing bonus, so that was not paid out. The Chief noted he has interviews coming up for the two open positions.

With the nicer weather, there has been an increase of speeding complaints. He noted that if any council members hear from residents, to let him know and they will move the speed sign around according to the sign up list.

There were no questions or comments for the Police Chief.

#### **B. Fire Chief (Grossman)**

Chief Grossman noted they continue to work with Green Vision – who remains in compliance after the mulch fire. The last piece to complete is the dry hydrants, and they are currently working on these now that the weather has been nicer.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted the part time pay ordinance is on tonight's agenda. Mr. Gerhardstein noted the part time pay line item (in the budget) is up \$32,000 for last year at this time. He noted there was an extra pay period, but asked for an explanation. Chief Grossman noted much of this is due to career staffing step increases. Additional vacation for them (as they move into one year or five-year anniversaries) means a greater need for part timers to back fill those shifts. Mr. Gerhardstein's concern is that the part time line item is at \$94,000 at the end of March with a total of only \$330,000 for the year, and this is before the pay increase that is on tonight's agenda. Chief Grossman noted he is aware, and it is a day-to-day management item he deals with trying to reduce overtime and keep it in check.

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

C. *Finance Director (Hunter)*

Finance Director Hunter had no report.

There were no questions or comments for the Finance Director.

D. *Engineer (Formica) Written Report Submitted*

Engineer Formica added he was notified Friday that preliminary applications for OPWC funding for 2025 will be due next month, he and the Service Director, along with the Lake County Water Department, have selected a few projects. He will be putting together those preliminary applications for water line replacement and resurfacing.

Councilperson Gerhardstein inquired regarding the time line for bids going out for the road projects for this year that were approved with the budget. Engineer Formica noted they should be ready in three to four weeks. He added that the slab replacement projects, since they are partially funded through this year's OPWC, will not be able to be awarded until July, but bids can still be advertised, etc.

Councilperson Gerhardstein also asked for an update on East 296<sup>th</sup> Street. The Engineer noted it seems to be going well and the plan is for the project to resume in about a week or so.

Council President Levon reminded Mr. Formica that Council would like the bid for Catawba to include the detours so that the equipment is not up and down the new street (E. 296<sup>th</sup>). Mr. Formica noted that will be included.

There were no additional questions or comments for the Engineer.

E. *Service Director (Strauser)*

Service Director Strauser wanted to make Council aware that, with regard to the salt issues, they will be pouring concrete in order to store the additional salt (approximately seven hundred tons) that is required by the contract. He has a plan in place, but will be using the additional "leftover" money to fund from the salt fund for the additional cost for storage of the unordered salt. The concrete is required by the EPA. He will not be asking for additional funds, but will likely use the remainder of the salt budget.

Additionally, with regard to the \$175,000 that was approved to replace the roof at the Service Department – Mr. Strauser has had additional quotes and discussions regarding the repair of the roof. He has decided to take a different approach and found a good solution that will reduce the cost of the repair to well under \$75,000 and has a twenty year warranty. This will save a good deal of money. He also brought to attention an issue with an area of the roof at the Police Station and a few sections at the old Service Garage. He plans to use the cost savings to make these additional repairs. He noted if there are any issues with this suggestion to let him know.

Councilperson Salotto asked if the new solution would also be used on the other additional repairs. Mr. Strauser noted the metal roof will get the newly proposed solution (as it is a metal roof). The other roofs are constructed with different materials requiring a different procedure for repair. Ms. Salotto asked if additional funds will be required. Mr. Strauser noted he believes even with the additional repairs, since there was a cost savings with the new proposal, he will still be under budget.

There were no questions or comments for the Service Director.

F. *Building Commissioner (Sack)*

Building Commissioner Sack reported he has been dealing with a noise complaint for the last six to eight weeks. No one has been able to locate where the low humming is coming from. He has enlisted the assistance of the Police and Service Departments and is still unable to determine the source of the sound. PCC Airfoils in the vicinity of the source of the sound, but after speaking with the plant manager and noting that there have been no changes with any of the machinery or systems (heating, cooling, etc.), have ruled that out.



Mr. Sack reported that the Norfolk and Southern Railroad erected a microwave tower on their property near the old Cleveland Crane.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted, with regard to the mystery sound, he was on East 291<sup>st</sup> Street at 4:00 am one morning, and witnessed it. He noted it does seem to be coming from PCC, but noted it is only heard at night. It can be heard on East 298<sup>th</sup> as well, but usually only at night possibly since there is not the normal traffic sounds from Euclid Avenue at night.

Mr. Gerhardstein inquired how long the new entertainment device arcade has been open. Mr. Sack noted it has been open approximately two weeks. He also noted the other one will also be opening soon – all is secure with licensure for both.

Mayor Sakacs noted the sound is coming from PCC, but even PCC cannot determine what it is. Mr. Gerhardstein noted that since it is an industrial area, the resident understands, but the resident has been there a long time and has not heard this noise until recently. Mayor Sakacs noted it is driving everyone crazy.

There were no further questions or comments for the Building Commissioner.

G. *Recreation Director (Stopp)*

Recreation Director noted the Connection has gone to print, so the summer offerings will be available soon. They are ready for online registrations.

There were no questions or comments for the Recreation Director.

### **Audience Participation**

Council President Levon opened Audience Participation to those in attendance at 7:16 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 should use the microphone as the meetings are being streamed on YouTube; they 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.

Joe Speccia, School Superintendent, wished to thank Council for considering the email that was sent this week as well as the letter that was sent a few weeks ago regarding the rezoning proposal. He noted that this project began in 2017 with community meetings. The School Board determined they would pursue what was in the best interest of the citizens of Wickliffe. He noted the community responded, through community meetings and a poll, that step-up housing was what was needed to keep families in and attract new families to Wickliffe. This has been the primary goal throughout the process. He mentioned the survey that was conducted, noting the company is from Columbus and Washington DC, so there was no conflict of interest. This was a poll which represents a sample of the community, not a census, which would have involved the entire community. The poll's results, determined to be 95% accurate and represent all demographics, were reported to Council and the community. It noted sixty percent wanted single-family homes. The Board then contracted with a land surveying company to create a zoning proposal to take to the Wickliffe Planning Commission. Mr. Speccia began working with several developers regarding the use of the property. The plan, including some commercial zoning on Euclid Avenue, was taken to Planning Commission for approval, and was turned down. The plan included both R1-50 and R1-60 lots. Planning Commission requested all the lots be designated R1-60, and a new plan with the modifications requested was submitted. This modified plan was approved by the Planning Commission. One member of Planning requested R1-75 lot size. The School Board took this suggestion to the developers and surveying company. All the developers were not interested in the R1-75 lots sizes, as this increases the cost of development, due to less lots and increase in price of the lots and homes on them. It likely prices out developers, as well as prices out consumers. He noted the Board of Education has done everything that was asked of them, from the survey to the modifications of the proposal. He believes this is an opportunity to attract new people and retain current residents. He is hopeful it will be approved tonight. He noted that, as a public body, they "live and die by the taxpayer". He stated that levies and increased taxes will never go away, but by selling this property as proposed, the next ask to the taxpayer may be reduced and delayed. He asked Council to vote in favor of the proposal.

John Farmer, 1830 East 290<sup>th</sup> Street, thanked the first responders, and noted that the Mayor's name came up at an event he attended and people were happy that the Mayor responds in a timely manner to complaints and does not "turn a blind eye". He thanked the Mayor.

Paul Diccio, 1836 Lincoln Road, noted he participated in many of the committees for the school property. He noted that step-up housing was definitely what was requested, similar to what is at Lloyd Court and Coulby Court. He noted it is important to listen to your constituents.

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 7:27PM.

### **Committee Reports**

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes (April 15, 2024 meeting) presented by Council President Levon

Motion by Levon, seconded by Gerhardstein, to authorize the Law Director to create legislation for Food Trucks.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

### **Commission Reports**

There were no Commission Reports.

### **Old Business**

There was no Old Business.

### **New Business**

A. Change of date: May 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting due to Holiday (Memorial Day)

Motion by Levon, seconded by Gerhardstein, that the date for the May 27<sup>th</sup> regular Council Meeting be changed to Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024 due to Memorial Day.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

### **Ordinances**

**OR2024-15 By Title Only** An ordinance providing for the compensation and other employment provisions for the part-time firefighters of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **THIRD READING**

Motion by Koski, seconded by Bala, that Ordinance 2024-15 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: Gerhardstein

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2024-15 adopted.**

**OR2024-20 By Title Only** An ordinance amending the City of Wickliffe Zone Map referred to in Section 1341.80 of the Wickliffe Codified Ordinances rezoning four parcels owned by the Wickliffe City School District in Wickliffe, Ohio **THIRD READING**

Motion by Thielman, seconded by Gerhardstein, that Ordinance 2024-20 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: Councilperson Thielman asked if this proposal fails and no changes are made to the text, does it need to be placed on three readings again and would it require a public hearing.



Council President Levon noted it would have to go back to the Planning Commission. He noted a new plan would have to be presented to the Planning Commission for approval, then there would need to be a public hearing by the Planning Commission, another public hearing by the City [Council], then three readings of the legislation.

Mr. Thielman noted, assuming it passes, he asked for an explanation of Section 341.60 of the zoning amendment procedure, regarding the submission of a development plan, and Council's approval of a development plan. He asked if Council gets to vote on a development plan. Councilperson Gerhardstein noted the current legislation is for the rezoning of the four parcels. Once it is rezoned, but before a development goes in, the plan must be submitted to Planning Commission (PC) for approval. Once it has been approved by PC, the plan will come before Council for approval.

Councilperson Thielman noted Chapter 1341 does give Council some guidance with regard to zoning map amendments. He noted the first item on this list, not by mistake, denotes a plan should be consistent with any comprehensive plan. He added that, ironically, a few years ago a Euclid Avenue study was performed in 2021-2022. He mentioned the multiple steps in this process, and stated the overwhelming response was that the area is old, outdated, and underutilized and what was requested was business, destination developments and vibrancy. He mentioned some of the recommendations, including missing housing types. He also mentioned the outdated zoning reported by the study, noting we are approximately sixty-three years out-of-date. He noted many of these rules were created from fear, and that we continue to hold on to the outdated Euclidian zoning, which is limiting. He noted the main recommendation of the study was that Wickliffe should "focus on creating mixed-use developments that serve as the face of the community, a recognizable image to attract visitors and businesses." He noted our fears are making us think that the less creative are correct. He noted if we suffer with the familiar rather than trying something new, the status quo seems to be the norm. He is sad as he cannot find enough who are willing to help with change. He has hope for the development plan. He acknowledged the school board's report of sixty percent who want this, but he noted he is part of the forty percent and will continue to advocate for something better for Wickliffe. He believes this is a lost opportunity, but believes in representative government.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted there is a public hearing approaching [May 2<sup>nd</sup>] regarding mixed use. He noted PC is working on an overlay which will cover some of what Mr. Thielman spoke about. He noted PC will continue to work on fixing the zoning.

Councilperson Thielman noted he appreciates this but does not like the arbitrary line regarding the depth of the overlay zone. He noted he will make that suggestion to PC, and added it is a good first step.

Mayor Sakacs noted he has talked to a lot of people. He noted his personal opinion is he would like a Legacy Village there. He noted he was elected to work for what the majority of the residents want, which is step-up housing. He noted when these homes are up for sale, they "fly off the market". He noted people move to other cities to find this. He believes this is a good compromise. He thinks we are beginning to move forward, and this will make people happy and bring new people in.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted at the beginning of this process, everyone went into the room with their own ideas, and no one specifically got what they wanted. He noted this was the best compromise. It took a long time to get to this, and hopes this is moved forward. He noted there will be an opportunity for approval of the development plan. He noted if people have ideas for changes, they should attend the PC meetings.

Councilperson Thielman noted he is not blaming one specific group, but reiterated we are sixty-three years behind and we are not prepared to tackle a mixed-use development in a timely fashion for the schools, but still believes this is a missed opportunity. He noted we are losing more opportunities as time goes by and we should get going on some changes as quick as possible.

Councilperson Salotto agreed. She noted we do need step-up housing in that spot and believes it will be good for the City. Her trepidation is that there are limited opportunities to move the City ahead to modernize and upgrade Euclid Avenue as suggested in the study. She wants to move the City forward. She noted she would like to have seen more thought put into embracing the opportunity at the center of Wickliffe with more creative thinking. She



understands where everyone is coming from, but believes this was a huge missed opportunity. She noted there are many property owners that are not doing anything with their buildings and it is painful to try to move forward. She acknowledged that many put in a great deal of work on this, but noted we need to think more creatively moving forward.

Councilperson Bala noted everyone wanted the step-up housing, He has visited many communities with these types of properties and noted they are wonderful and they sell like crazy. He noted he respects Councilman Thielman's opinion, but also noted this is an opportunity for the step-up housing, a community within a community. He noted people never move out [of Wickliffe], and their families move in – it's a place where everyone knows everyone. He agrees the step-up housing is needed and hopes everyone else wants the same. He mentioned anyone who votes against this is selfish, since it is what the people want.

Council President Levon noted a point of order: for this to pass, it will need five "yes" votes, as Chapter 134 requires a two-thirds vote of all members of Council to approve.

Councilperson Salotto noted that what Mr. Thielman shared regarding the survey is the opposite of what Mr. Bala just said. She noted one survey noted people (sixty percent) wanted step-up housing and one survey (more than sixty percent) noted people wanted much more, like revitalization and modernization, and vibrancy. She noted it is not selfish, rather thinking about the people who said something quite different.

Council President Levon stated his only argument is what is the difference between the Euclid Avenue streetscape and this lot. He noted this lot [the four parcels] he considers more on Lincoln and Arlington. He also stated the portion that will be on Euclid Avenue can be part of the new overlay and will be General Business and can be mixed-use. He considers the R1-60 portion to be a part of the Lincoln, Arlington, Silver area.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted [to Salotto and Thielman] that he appreciates both of their passions, but this is the result of the work of PC since last fall, winter, and spring of this year, on multiple occasions for more than two hours a night. He noted there were a number of heated arguments, but this should have been a part of those meetings. He thinks that to not have attended any of the previous meetings and then at the end to do this - he hopes if this fails, the next time everyone puts forth the effort to come to PC and work through and spend the time so they can feel they got what they wanted.

Councilperson Thielman noted he does not believe it is PC's responsibility to figure out what to do with the land or to design it, rather it is the responsibility of the landowner to bring a proposal. He noted a developer usually proposes a plan that is already laid out (with roads, etc.). He would like to know these things and noted it is usually established prior to Council approving zoning changes. He also noted that at many PC meetings, there is no open forum for individuals to speak, as he believes is correct.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted the workshops, which occurred every two weeks [where much of this discussion occurred], were not closed to public comment.

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2024-20 adopted.**

**OR2024-25 By Title Only** An ordinance amending Section 1305.6 entitled "Architectural Review Board" of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio **SECOND READING**

**OR2024-30 By Title Only** An ordinance that repeals, in toto, Ordinance No. 2019-17, passed February 25, 2019; and declaring an emergency

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Ordinance 2024-30 be placed on third and final reading.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, that Ordinance 2024-30 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2024-30 adopted.**

**OR2024-31** *By Title Only* An ordinance amending a section of Chapter 521 entitled Health, Safety, and Sanitation of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio FIRST READING

**OR2024-32** *By Title Only* An ordinance enacting Section 521.17 entitled Food Trucks, a Section of Chapter 521 – Health, Safety, and Sanitation, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio FIRST READING

### Resolutions

There were no resolutions.

### Other Legislation

There was no Other Legislation.

### Miscellaneous

Councilperson Bala noted he attended the grand opening of the Board Room, one of the new Entertainment Device Arcades in the City. He noted it was clean and bright. He hopes they will do well, and encouraged residents to support all Wickliffe businesses, especially new Wickliffe businesses.

### Adjournment

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

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM.

  
Clerk of Council

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Council President and Presiding Officer