

City of Groveport

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Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 21, 2022

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

Committee of the Whole

Mayor Lance Westcamp

Council Members - Jean Ann Hilbert, Ed Dildine, Shawn Cleary, Becky Hutson, Scott Lockett & Jack Rupp

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Hilbert called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Staff Present: BJ King - Administrator, Kevin Shannon - Law Director, Jason Carr - Finance Director, Josh Short - Patrol Lieutenant, Tom Walker - Director of Golf, Steve Farst - City Engineer, Ruthanne Sargus Ross - Clerk of Council, Mindy Kay - Assistant Clerk of Council

Guests Present: The Guest Book is on file with the Clerk of Council

II. Moment of Silence

Committee Chair Hilbert asked everyone to join her in a moment of silence.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

John Hougland led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Roll Call

Present: 6 - Cleary, Dildine, Hilbert, Hutson, Lockett, and Rupp

V. Approval of Minutes - October 17, 2022

The October 17, 2022 Committee of the Whole Minutes stand approved as submitted.

[#246-2022](#) COTW Minutes 10.17.2022

Attachments: [COTW Minutes 10.17.2022.pdf](#)

VI. Business of Guests**A. Madison Township Fire Chief Robinson**

Chief Robinson addressed Council with some updates. The first being the status of fire engine 181 that was struck by a truck on I-270 back in January. The engine repairs have been completed. He said someone had been sent to do the final inspection and the engine should be back in service probably within the next two weeks. Also, the new engine that we

ordered came in. Its' inspection was done back in September and it is currently having the radios and computer work installed. From there it will go to a local vendor to have tools and equipment mounted. We hope to have that truck in service by the middle of December. He then added that engine 181 would be carrying Mayor Westcamp and a "special guest" to Heritage Park on Sunday, December 4th for the Heritage Holiday. He also informed the committee that Madison Township will be having their annual Santa Parade on December 3rd. It will be going through Blacklick Estates.

Mrs. Hilbert asked Chief Robinson to make Council aware of how expensive a fire truck actually is. Chief Robinson referred to the truck that we ordered almost two years ago, and said that they did go ahead and order another truck about six or seven months after that in efforts to get ahead of the price increase and supply chain issues that we're having that is prolonging the building of these vehicles. He mentioned that Chief Adams is having the same problems with police cruisers as well. With that, he said that we are trying to be fiscally responsible and look ahead to make those purchases ahead of time to try to reduce those costs. He added that we are currently looking into purchasing a third fire truck. As it stands now, there is a thirty to thirty-six month build time and that would be about the time he was planning on having a third truck anyway. By locking the price in now, we could be saving upwards of \$300,000 to \$400,000 due to price increases over the next three years. He told Council that things are starting to come down in some industries. The prices of lumber and building materials are down about 40% from last year, but we are not seeing that decrease in the public safety sector with any of our equipment. He then told Council that the last two trucks that were purchased about seven months apart had a price difference of about \$60,000. The price of the trucks that we ordered two years ago at a price \$600,000 would cost upwards of \$850,000 today.

Council Member Cleary swayed the discussion over to fire engine safety in light of a recent tragedy involving the loss of a firefighter's life in Cleveland. He said an officer in Gahanna was also hit last Saturday. Mr. Cleary wants to encourage everyone to please be aware of officers and utility crews when you are driving. He said those lights mean something and we need to prevent any further tragedies from happening on the road. That Cleveland firefighter is not coming home, he said. He concluded by urging everyone to be vigilant, and if weather is bad stay home. It's just not worth it. Chief Robinson agreed and added that it is the law to get over if there is an emergency or utility vehicle on the side of the road with its lights on. He encourages people to get over so we can avoid such tragedies from happening. It's not just police and firefighters, it's tow truck drivers, utility and construction workers too.

Mr. Rupp thought it could be beneficial to use a dump truck with some kind of barrier on the back as a blocking vehicle to prevent accidents. Chief Robinson said it is definitely worth looking into. He said that hopefully by next fall we could use one of our retired fire engines that has over 350,000 miles on it. He told Council that he has seen other fire departments use their old engines as blockers. What it would come down to is staffing.

Mr. Dildine included that a media blast on driving laws and driving safety information would be a good idea. Chief Robinson agreed and said that we could definitely use social media outlets to spread information or even adding pamphlets to the goodie bags at the Santa Parade. The more people we can reach, the more of a difference we can make.

[#247-2022](#)

MTFD Monthly Report

Attachments: [MTFD Monthly Report.pdf](#)

B Bruce Smith

Bruce Smith, 283 Kessler Street, spoke about the success of our Haunted Park event this Halloween. He said we had good weather and lines up to an hour and a half long. The Kid's Event was a success too, with a line stretching the length of the park. About 1800 people attended and we accumulated donations of \$8,608 to be split between Groveport Madison Human Needs and the Groveport Food Bank. He said we were such a success that other municipalities are reaching out about how they could get such an event started. We also helped the Elementary School set up their haunted hallway. He concluded by saying how pleased he is that word is getting out about our events. He said our goal is to raise \$10,000 and we've got some more ideas to really amp it up.

VII. New Business

VIII. Unfinished Business

IX. Ordinances and Resolutions

A. 3rd Readings

[Ord. 2022-039](#)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING PART FIFTEEN - FIRE PREVENTION CODE OF THE CITY OF GROVEPORT CODIFIED ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 1519, FIREWORKS

Attachments: [Ord. 2022-039 Exhibit A.pdf](#)

Greg Keller, 289 Fayer Court, addressed Council with his concerns about Ordinance 2022-039. He said that based on the October 30th issue of the Messenger the maximum amount of days you can let off fireworks would be sixteen. He went on to explain that for a period of about fifteen years he would fire off anywhere from a dozen to twenty 500-gram repeaters. He would recommend going to Phantom Fireworks to understand what we are dealing with in regards to consumer grade fireworks being lit off within corporate limits. He said that consumer vs commercial is a fine line in his opinion because either one can kill and mame. He informed Council of how a Columbus Bluejackets goalie took a mortar from a firework to the chest and ultimately lost his life. He also spoke of a local businessman who was injured dealing with a firework that didn't explode until he picked it up. He went on to say that when he was in the business of shooting off fireworks, whether in a rural setting or within corporate limits, he would construct platforms for these 500-gram repeaters. Then, for the upmost safety, he would light one fuse and all the fireworks would go off in sequence. He said that at the last fireworks show he ever worked last year he went to inspect the platform after the fireworks show and one of the 500-gram repeaters had malfunctioned. It had exploded on the pad. It was then he realized how unsafe fireworks are even if you use the highest safety measures when setting them up. He went on to express that fireworks are a hazard especially to people setting them off in a highly urban setting or within a subdivision. You just don't have enough room within a back yard or side yard to really be safe, especially if you're placing them on the ground because they can easily tip over. Mr. Keller then turned Council's focus to the sound fireworks make and the potential repercussions. He said a lot of our residents are veterans who are subject to PTSD and fireworks are the last thing they need to hear going off up to sixteen days per year. He said they've been through enough trauma already and we need to consider their situation. He then explained how pets and pet owners also suffer due to the sound of fireworks. He explained that owners have to medicate their dogs, isolate them and even play loud music but still the Fourth of July has the greatest influx of runaway dogs throughout the year. He concluded by expressing the safety of the citizens is top priority and recommends that fireworks only be allowed on the Fourth of July and not throughout the rest of the year.

A motion was made by Council Member Lockett, seconded by Council Member Dildine, to recommend approval to the City Council. The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Dildine, Hutson, and Lockett

No: 3 - Cleary, Hilbert, and Rupp

[Ord. 2022-040](#)

AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING / AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ENTER INTO AN EASEMENT AGREEMENT WITH GROVEPORT VENTURE, LLC AND TO ACCEPT THE GRANT OF STORM SEWER EASEMENTS FOR A STORM SEWER SYSTEM LOCATED AT 3755 HAYES ROAD, PARCEL NUMBER 185-003034

Administrator BJ King informed Council that this Ordinance pertains to CA Ventures and as part of that development there are easements that are needed in order for the City to maintain drainage. This would authorize approving that easement to make that happen. City Engineer Steve Farst explained that normally these are done as instruments that are part of the plat but the way things sequenced, the design of the improvements was not approved yet when the plat was voted on. That left us no choice but for this to be done by separate instrument. He said that all three ordinances are being presented for that same reason, just for different elements of the improvements and of the drainage coming off of Hayes Road.

A motion was made by Council Member Cleary, seconded by Council Member Dildine, to recommend approval to the City Council. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Cleary, Dildine, Hilbert, Hutson, Lockett, and Rupp

[Ord. 2022-041](#)

AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING / AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ENTER INTO AN EASEMENT AGREEMENT WITH GROVEPORT VENTURE, LLC AND TO ACCEPT THE GRANT OF STORMWATER MANAGEMENT DRAINAGE EASEMENTS FOR SITE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BASINS LOCATED AT 3755 HAYES ROAD, PARCEL NUMBER 185-003034

A motion was made by Council Member Dildine, seconded by Council Member Hutson, to recommend approval to the City Council. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Cleary, Dildine, Hilbert, Hutson, Lockett, and Rupp

[Ord. 2022-042](#)

AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING / AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ENTER INTO AN EASEMENT AGREEMENT WITH GROVEPORT VENTURE, LLC AND TO ACCEPT THE GRANT OF CONSERVATION EASEMENT FOR PROTECTION OF A STREAM CORRIDOR PROJECTION AREA AT 3755 HAYES ROAD, PARCEL NUMBER 185-003034

A motion was made by Council Member Hutson, seconded by Council Member Cleary, to recommend approval to the City Council. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Cleary, Dildine, Hilbert, Hutson, Lockett, and Rupp

[Ord. 2022-043](#)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 18-050 (ADOPTED 12/17/2018) ESTABLISHING GOLF RATES AND FEES FOR THE GROVEPORT MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE

Attachments: [Ord. 2022-043 Exhibit A.pdf](#)

Mr. King reminded Council that as discussed in a previous meeting, the cost to purchase range balls has gone up 50%. This ordinance would increase the rate for our buckets of range balls and also codify the cost for range balls and make it consistent with all the other rates we have for the golf course. There would be one ordinance that encompasses all of the costs for the golf course.

Mr. Cleary asked what our costs were compared to other golf courses. Director of Golf Tom Walker said that there are fewer courses around now but the most comparable would be the course in West Chester. Their price is \$18 for a large bucket and ours is currently at \$12. He then explained that based on what he's been told, the quality of our balls and hitting surfaces are significantly better and stated that we are grossly undercharging. Mr. King added that this would increase our price to \$16 for a large bucket.

Mr. Cleary then commented that our prices are very reasonable, but asked if they were perhaps too reasonable. Mr. Walker confirmed that our prices are appropriate, however maybe on the low side of appropriate for a municipality golf course. Mr. King added that our course gets a lot of play and that we raised rates not too long ago. This is keeping us in line with the raising rates of the economy. Mr. Walker agreed and said that there was an expectation for there to be a fall off in business when the rates were raised last time but that did not happen. John Hougland, 865 Elm Street, addressed Council by commenting on the last price raise at the golf course. He said that even though the rates went up, the new paths are wonderful. He did mention that perhaps the golf course may be short staffed. He explained that he's noticed maintenance and groundskeeping seems to be a bit lacking. He recommends that Council consider raising the pay rates for its employees. He went on to say that it is hard work, outside and physically demanding and people don't want to do it for \$10 an hour when they can go flip burgers for \$15 an hour or work at a service station for \$17 an hour. Administrator King agreed and informed Mr. Hougland and Council of the City's upcoming compensation study in 2023. He said that the golf course employee pay rates would definitely be worth taking a look at.

A motion was made by Council Member Dildine, seconded by Council Member Hutson, to recommend approval to the City Council. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Cleary, Dildine, Hilbert, Hutson, Lockett, and Rupp

[Ord. 2022-044](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATOR TO DONATE THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 595 CHERRY STREET, PARCEL NUMBER 185-000230 TO THE GREATER GROVEPORT FOOD PANTRY

Mr. King informed Council that the food pantry has said they are willing to accept the donation of this property for their use. He said there have been discussions with them and believes it would be a good move for the City to go forward with the donation.

A motion was made by Council Member Rupp, seconded by Council Member Hutson, to recommend approval to the City Council. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Cleary, Dildine, Hilbert, Hutson, Lockett, and Rupp

B. 2nd Readings

None

X. Financial Report

Financial Director Jason Carr began by informing Council that the 2022 income taxes are \$3.2 million higher or 22% when compared to the previous year. We exceeded the budget and are currently at 102%. Our general fund balance is \$2.1 million higher than the previous year. In the month of October, we did start loaning ourselves money. \$500,000 went from the debt service fund to the general fund, which was subsequently paid to the Groveport CIC so that we can begin interior construction for both the Rarey's Port and Wert's Grove buildings. The total amount was to not exceed the \$2.2 million that Council had approved by Ordinance in a previous meeting. He also stated that in our investment portfolio we currently have 50% of our investments maturing in one year or less. He said that short period of time is to catch interest rates and he will continue to follow the Federal Reserve minutes to see how rates will change. As they stop raising rates we will allocate that accordingly. He went on to say that part of our payroll allocation that is part of our budget is allocated to the Public Works Department. It goes to the street fund, water fund, sewer fund and also our stormwater fund. We have stopped allocating payroll costs to the sewer fund based on the balance of

\$28,000 that we had at the end of October. We will continue this the rest of the year, reason being the utility funds are supposed to be self-operating. The increase of cost related to maintenance, salaries and benefits in general caused the fund to decrease over time. He added that the 2023 budget does have this allocation back to normal.

[#248-2022](#)

Financial Report

Attachments: [Financial Report.pdf](#)

XI. Other Business

XII. Reports

A. Mayor - Lance Westcamp

Mayor Westcamp greeted Council and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. He then recognized Lieutenant Short and thanked him for his added leadership in our Police Department. He said that Lieutenant Short has far exceeded expectations and that he appreciates him working so well with Chief Adams. He then thanked Lieutenant Short and Administrator King for attending the safety meetings at the school.

B. Administrator - BJ King

Mr. King commended the Town Hall staff for all their hard work on the Veterans Day event. He said it was a great event and the speaker was tremendous. He went on to inform Council that the next big event is Heritage Holiday on December 4th from 3:00pm to 6:00pm. The tree lighting will be around 6:00. He then reminded everyone about the staff Christmas luncheon on December 9th.

C. Director of Law - Kevin Shannon

D. Director of Finance - Jason Carr

E. Chief of Police - Casey Adams

Lieutenant Short spoke about recent events at Groveport Madison Schools. He stated that the schools have been a little trying here lately, however wanted to stress that it is a school district issue and not a City of

Groveport issue. He said he's seeing overwhelming support for the Police Department and for our community. He said that we had a meeting with the school district and thanked Mr. King for attending. After the meeting the schools were more compelled to take action on rising issues. Lieutenant Short informed Council he feels like everyone is on the same page and things are going to move in the right direction, especially in regards to the schools resource officers and using criminal charges to hopefully gain some traction against the offenders and repeat offenders. He then added that the same night he and Chief Adams attended the school board meeting. He said it was very well attended and there were many speakers who talked about all the recent events at the school. He concluded by saying the school board seems to be taking the situation very seriously and believes that they're not going to let things continue on the path that they're going.

Mr. Rupp mentioned a hot line Homeland Security has that people can call and report suspicious activities and asked if the school has thought about implementing something like that to help fight against the rising crime there. Lieutenant Short said he was not sure if the number they have provided is through the state-wide system because usually when calls go through that system, he gets them. He said he personally hadn't received any last year and this year he believes he only received one, which was a social media threat. He said he would follow up on that. He added that the last two incidents involving guns at the school came in through tips but he doesn't know the method in which the school received them.

Mrs. Hutson asked if the school had a policy in place in which they are allowed to deny enrollment to students from other school systems or if there was a screening process in place. Lieutenant Short said that Groveport Madison is not open enrollment. He said that from conversations with Deputy Superintendent Smathers, he learned that if a student is expelled from a public school they do not have to accept them at Groveport Madison. He added that our district does have a high number of students with IEPs thus limiting their options when it comes to expulsion. With an IEP, the longest they can expel a student is for a calendar year if the offense is not a manifestation of that disability. If the offense is a manifestation of the disability, then the behavior needs to be addressed accordingly.

[#249-2022](#)

PD Council Report

Attachments: [PD Council Report.pdf](#)

F. Development Director - Jeff Green

[#250-2022](#) DEV Council Report

Attachments: [DEV Council Report.pdf](#)

G. Public Service Director - Brian Strayer

[#251-2022](#) PW Council Report

Attachments: [PW Council Report.pdf](#)

H. Chief Building Official - Stephen Moore

[#252-2022](#) B&Z Council Report

Attachments: [B&Z Council Report.pdf](#)

I. Director of Golf - Tom Walker

[#253-2022](#) GOLF Council Report

Attachments: [GOLF Council Report.pdf](#)

J. Recreation Director - Seth Bowers

[#254-2022](#) REC Council Report

Attachments: [REC Council Report.pdf](#)

K. Community Affairs Director - Jessica Wyke

[#255-2022](#) CA Council Report

Attachments: [CA Council Report.pdf](#)

L. City Engineer - Steve Farst

[#256-2022](#) ENG Council Report

Attachments: [ENG Council Report.pdf](#)

M. Director of Transportation - Bob Dowler

[#257-2022](#) DOT Council Report

Attachments: [DOT Council Report.pdf](#)

N. Personnel Director - Joyce Myers

[#258-2022](#) HR Council Report

Attachments: [HR Council Report.pdf](#)

O. Director of Information Technology - Trevor Swackhamer

[#259-2022](#) IT Council Report

Attachments: [IT Council Report.pdf](#)

P. Clerk of Council - Ruthanne Sargus Ross

Mrs. Ross updated Council on the Cemify software we have purchased for the cemetery. She passed out a timeline provided by Cemify. They will be mapping the cemetery immediately and hopefully we will be able to start implementing the system by February 2023.

Q. Council Members - Jean Ann Hilbert, Ed Dildine, Shawn Cleary, Becky Hutson, Scott Lockett and Jack Rupp

Mr. Lockett spoke in respect to the schools. He said he knows there have been some incidents recently and that's what people focus on. But from what he sees there, the vast majority of the students there are working hard, doing what they're supposed to do and are good citizens. He went on to say the teachers and administration do an excellent job and we need to remember that the positives are so much greater than the negatives we see.

Mrs. Hutson agreed and added that she'd hate to see the good kids and staff get hurt because we have lack of rules. She said she knows there's a lot of positives and we should focus on them. Mrs. Hutson and Mrs. Hilbert agreed the school needs to have effective rules in place.

XIII. Adjournment

Council Member Cleary made a motion, seconded by Council Member Hutson, to adjourn at 6:43 p.m. All in favor stated AYE, None Opposed. Motion passed.

Jean Ann Hilbert, President Pro Tem

Mindy Kay
Assistant Clerk of Council

PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM. A RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE DURING REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS.