



**MINUTES REGULAR MEETING
REYNOLDSBURG CITY COUNCIL
September 23, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Meredith Lawson-Rowe called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

INVOCATION - Pastor Renee Russell of City Church of Reynoldsburg

The invocation was given by Pastor Renee Russell of City Church of Reynoldsburg.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Cotner, Baker, Lawson-Rowe, Strickland, Salvati, Pyakurel, Hill

ABSENT: Johnson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting Minutes of September 9, 2024

The regular meeting minutes of September 9, 2024 were approved as submitted.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Tatjana Bozhinovski
412 Cheyenne Way

Ms. Bozhinovski stated that she was here on behalf of Dr. Seleshi Asfaw, the CEO and President of Tewahedo ETSS. An organization that, for the last 20 years, has been a pillar of Franklin County in working with immigrant and refugee families. Ms. Bozhinovski has spoken to Council before about how wonderful it was to be part of a community that had immigrants and refugees from all walks of life. She explained that, time after time, Council showed support for our neighbors in the community. She stated that she was blessed to have the Macedonian Church here and that the Macedonian Festival was so highly attended. She explained that she was also excited about the

Diwali Festival coming up as well. She stated that it was with a heavy heart that she and ETSS were here to show support for our neighbors in the Springfield community as they had been wrapped up in a whirlpool of controversy in the national news due to false claims from certain individuals. Springfield leaders have repeatedly stated that these were false claims, including the Mayor. The City faced dozens of bombing and shooting threats, schools and offices were shut down due to this fear, and legal immigrants were fearful in their own homes. People from neighboring cities flooded Haitian restaurants to support local businesses and statements from all over were given in support. She stated that she would like to read the statement given by ETSS on this situation,

"We are deeply saddened by the challenges facing our Haitian brothers and sisters. In these difficult times, we stand with the Springfield community and commit to doing everything within our power to come together and provide relief. Together, we can help ease the strain and offer the support that is so desperately needed." This statement is from Seleshi Asfaw. As an immigrant herself, she knows how vital a sense of belonging is. In the spirit of Tewahedo, which means 'coming together as one,' she asked that we support our neighbors and pray for everyone's safety. America was always and will be the country where we have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Councilmember Pyakurel stated that when he heard that statement, it personally affected him as an immigrant. He asked if ETSS specifically works with the Haitian community. Ms. Bozhinovksi stated that they do work with them, and she was the soon-to-be Director of the resettlement program. She was the Assistant Director. She had with her a Haitian immigrant who works with the Haitian community, as well as the Ukrainian and Afghan communities. She stated that during their most recent communications with Haitian immigrants, they stated that children were afraid to go outside to walk to school. Once they get to school, they were on lockdown due to threats. She explained that these people came here for a better life and once again feel unsafe in their homes.

Councilmember Strickland thanked her for bringing this issue to Council when there are false narratives being stated around the country. She explained that her heart goes out to the community, and she does not agree with the statements being made.

Councilmember Baker stated that a lot of his family lives in Springfield and his uncle was the first African American male Mayor of Springfield. He stated seeing things happening in the community was heartbreaking. He stated that the comments made about Springfield were false claims and flat out racist. He stated that as a community, we should stand with Springfield. He stated that he appreciated everything Ms. Bozhinovski had done and everything she did. She thanked him and stated that they were glad they were able to tell Springfield leaders that other communities were supporting them.

President Lawson-Rowe stated that she was from Springfield and had many family members still living there. She stated that her mother still attended the church they grew up in and many Haitian community members go there as well. She stated that this community had become a scapegoat just because they happen to look like her. She stated that this situation was heartbreaking, but they do not stand alone in this fight.

Shana French and Amanda Jones
886 Hunt Valley Drive

Ms. French stated that she was the treasurer for Friends of Reynoldsburg Schools and Ms. Jones is the chair. Ms. Jones stated that she wanted to thank everyone for their support for the Reynoldsburg City Schools levy. They do have a few events coming up that are posted on the Facebook page, and they asked for Council's support and possibly attend these events if possible. Ms. French stated that they are more in need of the levy now than ever before. They have not passed a levy since 2010. There has been a rise in costs and workers deserve a raise. They were already making as many cost-saving decisions as possible, and they would have to continue to cut programs if they cannot get more funding. They have already had to get rid of art class at Rosehill elementary because of funding, and they do not want to see this continue to happen. They also have yard signs available through their Facebook page.

Councilmember Baker stated that he supported this 1000% as his wife was a teacher, so he understands the struggle.

Councilmember Strickland thanked them for taking the lead on this issue, and she supports the levy as well. They should do everything they can to take care of children and teachers.

Councilmember Pyakurel

Councilmember Pyakurel stated that October 5 was the Diwali festival at Civic Park and there would be music, activities, and food and hoped everyone from Council and the community would come to the event.

Mayor Begeny

Mayor Begeny stated that there are a lot of events coming up over the next few weeks and encouraged people to check the City's Facebook page for more information. He also gave a shout-out to the first Reynoldsburg adult prom hosted by the Parks and Recreation Department to raise funds for the scholarships program. He stated it was a great event.

A Proclamation Recognizing September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

Mayor Begeny read the proclamation. He invited the Bish family to the podium as they have been affected and lost a child to childhood cancer.

Franklin County Auditor Presentation - Jack O'Grady, Community Outreach Coordinator

Mr. O'Grady stated that he was here from the Franklin County Auditor's office to give an update. He explained that in 2023, they conducted a property reappraisal.



On November 8th, the Board of Revision Applications will open for the Tax Year 2024. He explained that there would also be a number of levies on the ballot this year. The Auditor's Office will have a levy estimator available on their website as of October 1st. The Auditor's Office supported Senate Bill 244, Senate Bill 271 - The Stinziano Solution, and modernizing the homestead exemption. Some important dates coming up include the October 1st levy estimator, October 12th affordable housing resource fair, November 8th Board of Revision Tax Year 2024 complaints, November 16th free e-waste and shredding, and December 1st dog licensing season opens up.

PROCLAMATIONS

A Proclamation Recognizing Hindu Heritage Month

Councilmember Pyakurel read the proclamation.

Councilmember Salvati made a motion to approve this Proclamation. Second by Councilmember Baker. Motion carried.

A Proclamation Recognizing Stormwater Awareness Week

Councilmember Strickland read the proclamation.

Councilmember Pyakurel made a motion to approve this Proclamation. Second by Councilmember Salvati. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

Treasury Board Minutes - August 2024

President Lawson-Rowe stated there were no additional Communications.

REPORTS

Liquor Permit

5 Brothers Sunoco LLC



Deputy Chief Grizzell stated that this request was for a transfer from SUBU Petroleum Inc, doing business as Main Street Food Mart, to 5 Brothers Sunoco. The permit was for a Class C1 and C2 permit allowing for carryout sales only of beer, wine, and pre-packaged low proof mixed beverages until 1am. The Ohio Department of Liquor Control advised there was a "stop transfer" on the application. The seller had a permit warning of "taxation, do not proceed", as well as active violations by the seller of the permit not being properly displayed, as well as selling to underage persons. Due to this information, RPD recommended a hearing on this transfer.

West Licking Fire District

Councilmember Baker stated that statistics for July and August were included in the packet. He stated that they provided top-notch service and thanked them for their hard work.

There is no Development, Parks & Recreation Committee meeting.

Public Safety, Law & Courts Committee

This is the Public Safety, Law & Courts Committee meeting for September 23, 2024.

Members in attendance are: Councilmember Cotner, Councilmember Hill, Chair Pyakurel, and President Lawson-Rowe.

A Resolution Authorizing the City Auditor to Remove Equipment from the City's Fixed Asset List for the Reynoldsburg Police Department

Deputy Chief Grizzell stated that this Resolution was for a 2017 Ford Explorer that had over 107,000 with a failing transmission. Their mechanic advised them that the cost of repair would be more than the value of the vehicle, so they recommended that this vehicle be sold and removed from the asset list.

Councilmember Salvati moved to forward this Resolution to Council for approval. Second by Councilmember Hill. Motion carried.

Public Service & Transportation Committee

This is the Public Service & Transportation Committee meeting for September 23, 2023.

Members in attendance are: Councilmember Cotner, Councilmember Hill, Chair

Strickland, and President Lawson-Rowe.

An Ordinance to Authorize the Mayor to Execute a Contract for City Hall LED Lighting Upgrades with Reimbursement from NOPEC Grant Funds, Appropriating Funds Therefor, **Waive Competitive Bidding, and Declaring an Emergency**

This legislation was back in Committee to be amended to add “Waive Competitive Bidding” language.

Councilmember Strickland moved to amend this Ordinance to add Section 5 “That pursuant to Ordinance No. 44-17 and Section 175.01(f) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Reynoldsburg, competitive bidding is hereby waived as this vendor is part of the State Cooperative Purchasing agreement” and renumber existing Section 5 to Section 6. Second by Councilmember Hill. Motion carried.

Councilmember Strickland moved to forward this amended Ordinance to Council for a second reading and emergency approval. Second by Councilmember Hill. Motion carried.

Finance & Administration Committee

An Ordinance Providing for the Issuance and Sale of Bonds in the Maximum Principal Amount of \$32,000,000 for the Purpose of Paying the Costs of Improving the City's Facilities by Constructing, Furnishing, and Equipping a Parks and Public Service Complex Including Related Site Improvements, Together with All Necessary and Related Appurtenances Thereto, and Declaring an Emergency

This item was returned to the Committee for further discussion and questions.

Mayor Begeny stated that last week the City received their credit rating and also found out the preliminary bid numbers for this complex. They will begin the process of going through those bids and deciding which option was the best for our City moving forward. He stated that all the bids they were considering came in under \$32 million, so depending on which direction they wanted to go in, they were in good shape.

Auditor Cicak after reviewing all documents and giving presentations on economic development. The City received a rating of AA2, which was an investment class rating. He explained that, based on many of the measurements, we could have received a better rating, but there were a few things like median household income

that kept us from being able to move up.

Councilmember Strickland asked what the next steps were for the building process. Auditor Cicak explained that they would now go into open market pricing for the bond, which would make it more competitive. This process should happen around the first week of November. To begin actual construction discussions, they would have to certify the bid, which had not been chosen yet. The bids still needed to be evaluated, but they did come in lower than expected. Mayor Begeny stated that he will most likely have a meeting this week to decide on a bid and go over possible issues.

Councilmember Baker moved to forward this Ordinance to Council for a second reading. Second by Councilmember Salvati. Motion carried.

An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a Contract for City Liability Insurance for a Period from October 14, 2024 to October 13, 2025, Appropriate Funds, Waive Competitive Bidding, and Declaring an Emergency

This Ordinance was returned to the Committee to amend the Ordinance to include the cost figure.

Director Cornell stated that at the last meeting they would bring a "do not exceed" number back to Council to be approved. That number came back at \$525,000 and there were a number of factors that caused the increase. Property value was up 6%, auto was up 13%, and auto physical damage was up 19% to cover the cost of repairs. The City's loss history has continued to be a significant concern with flood rates continuing to skyrocket. We should also expect the property deductible to increase to \$10,000 from \$5,000 and our employment practice deductible to increase to \$50,000 from \$25,000.

Councilmember Baker moved to amend the Ordinance to add language "not to exceed \$525,000". Second by Councilmember Salvati. Motion carried.

Councilmember Baker moved to forward this amended Ordinance to Council for a second reading and emergency approval. Second by Councilmember Strickland. Motion carried.

An Ordinance Authorizing the Renewal of the City's Vision Insurance Coverage with VSP for the Period Beginning January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2028, and Waive Competitive Bidding

Director Cornell stated this legislation was for the City employee vision insurance. This agreement was for four years with no rate increases and current rates would



remain the same until 2028.

Councilmember Baker moved to forward this Ordinance to Council for a first reading. Second by Councilmember Salvati. Motion carried.

A Resolution Accepting the Amounts and Rates as Determined by the Budget Commission and Authorizing the Necessary Tax Levies and Certifying Them to the Licking County Auditor for 2025

Auditor Cicak stated that this Resolution and the next Resolution were almost the same - one for Licking County and one for Franklin County. This Resolution was an annual housekeeping item and a second part of our budget process. He explained that we sent them our tax budget in July, and this Resolution authorized the counties to collect the taxes.

Councilmember Pyakurel asked why this was only for Franklin and Licking County. Auditor Cicak stated that Fairfield County does not require legislation as there was little property tax to collect in Fairfield County. He indicated he would research the issue further.

Councilmember Baker moved to forward this Resolution to Council for approval. Second by Councilmember Strickland. Motion carried.

A Resolution Accepting the Amounts and Rates as Determined by the Budget Commission and Authorizing the Necessary Tax Levies and Certifying Them to the Franklin County Auditor for 2025

Auditor Cicak stated that this Resolution was the same as the one we previously discussed, but for Franklin County.

Councilmember Baker moved to forward this Resolution to Council for approval. Second by Councilmember Strickland. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS - CONSENT AGENDA

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Baker
SECONDER:	Salvati
AYES:	Cotner, Baker, Lawson-Rowe, Strickland, Salvati, Pyakurel, Hill

A Resolution Authorizing the City Auditor to Remove Equipment from the City's Fixed Asset List for the Reynoldsburg Police Department



A Resolution Accepting the Amounts and Rates as Determined by the Budget Commission and Authorizing the Necessary Tax Levies and Certifying Them to the Licking County Auditor for 2025

A Resolution Accepting the Amounts and Rates as Determined by the Budget Commission and Authorizing the Necessary Tax Levies and Certifying Them to the Franklin County Auditor for 2025

CONSENT AGENDA FOR EMERGENCY ADOPTION

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Salvati
SECONDER:	Baker
AYES:	Cotner, Baker, Lawson-Rowe, Strickland, Salvati, Pyakurel, Hill

An Ordinance Consenting to the Annexation of Certain Real Property Located at 8718 Summit Road in Etna Township Consisting of 69.4+/- Acres Owned by Maple Wood Farms Ltd. and Carol S. Christy and Richard Halley, and Declaring an Emergency

An Ordinance to Authorize the Mayor to Execute a Contract for City Hall LED Lighting Upgrades with Reimbursement from NOPEC Grant Funds, Appropriating Funds Therefor, **Waive Competitive Bidding, and Declaring an Emergency**

An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a Contract to Purchase Nine Speed Display Signs and Maintenance Plans for the Service Department, and Declaring an Emergency

An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a Contract for City Liability Insurance for a Period from October 14, 2024 to October 13, 2025, Appropriate Funds, Waive Competitive Bidding, and Declaring an Emergency



An Ordinance Authorizing Renewal of the City's Dental Insurance Coverage with Delta Dental for the Period from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, Waive Competitive Bidding, and Declaring an Emergency

CONSENT AGENDA FOR FIRST READING

President Lawson-Rowe stated that this Ordinance stood for a first reading.

An Ordinance Authorizing the Renewal of the City's Vision Insurance Coverage with VSP for the Period Beginning January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2028, and Waive Competitive Bidding

CONSENT AGENDA FOR SECOND READING

President Lawson-Rowe stated that these Ordinances stood for a second reading.

An Ordinance Providing for the Issuance and Sale of Bonds in the Maximum Principal Amount of \$32,000,000 for the Purpose of Paying the Costs of Improving the City's Facilities by Constructing, Furnishing, and Equipping a Parks and Public Service Complex Including Related Site Improvements, Together with All Necessary and Related Appurtenances Thereto, and Declaring an Emergency

An Ordinance Appropriating Funds from the Unappropriated General Fund to Accounts in the Community Events Department from the Martin Luther King Breakfast

CONSENT AGENDA FOR THIRD READING AND APPROVAL

RESULT:	PASSED (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Baker
SECONDER:	Strickland
AYES:	Cotner, Baker, Lawson-Rowe, Strickland, Salvati, Pyakurel, Hill

An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 3 Traffic Code, Sections 303.99 General Traffic Code Penalties and 371.01 Right-of-Way in Crosswalk to Increase the Penalties for Distracted Driving and Violations in a Crosswalk that Result in



Harm to a Person in the Codified Ordinances for the City of Reynoldsburg, Ohio

An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 160, Section 160.02 Authorized Positions, Personnel, Classifications, and Pay Grades (a) Administration for the City of Reynoldsburg, Ohio

An Ordinance Appropriating Funds from the Unappropriated General Fund to Accounts in the Communications/Events Department

OTHER COUNCIL MATTERS

There were no Other Council Matters.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

**October 3, 2024 Planning & Zoning Board
October 14, 2024 Council
October 17, 2024 Planning & Zoning Board
October 28, 2024 Council
October 31, 2024 Trick or Treat**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(3) "to conference with an attorney concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action."

President Lawson-Rowe indicated that Council was going into Executive Session and would not conduct any business following the end of the Executive Session.

Councilmember Salvati made a motion to enter into Executive Session pursuant to ORC Section 121.22 (G)(1) "to conference with an attorney concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action."



Second by Councilmember Baker.

Councilmember Baker - yes; Councilmember Cotner - yes; Councilmember Strickland - yes; Councilmember Salvati - yes; Councilmember Pyakurel - yes; Councilmember Hill - yes; President Lawson-Rowe - yes.

Motion carried.

Council invited Mayor Begeny, Attorney Leist, Attorney Gary Batke, Director Cornell, and Clerk Prasher to remain in the session.

Councilmember Strickland made a motion to leave Executive Session. Second by Councilmember Hill.

Councilmember Baker - yes; Councilmember Cotner - yes; Councilmember Strickland - yes; Councilmember Salvati - yes; Councilmember Pyakurel - yes; Councilmember Hill - yes; President Lawson-Rowe - yes.

Motion carried.

Council went back into regular session.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Council President Lawson-Rowe adjourned the meeting.

Meredith Lawson-Rowe, President of
Council

Mollie Prasher, Clerk of Council