

City of Springdale Council

November 2, 2022

President of Council Vanover called Council to order on November 2, 2022.

The governmental body and those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. McNear took roll call. Council members Anderson, Ghantous, Hawkins, Jacobs, Ramirez, Sullivan-Wisecup, Vanover were present.

President Vanover: Council, before we address the minutes, we're going to do a "switcheroo". We're going to move the Introduction of Police Department New Employees ahead of the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management Presentation. He said he'd like to be here to see it. So, we won't argue with our guest.

The minutes of the October 19, 2022 meeting were considered. Mrs. Ghantous made a motion to accept the minutes; Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup seconded. The minutes were approved with seven affirmative votes.

Introduction of New Employees – Springdale Police Department

President Vanover: Mayor Webster, Mr. Jones, do you want to do the introduction and the Police Department.

Mr. Jones: Actually, we'll just jump right and we'll ask our Chief of Police, Tom Wells, to come down at this time, and we have two new officers that are on board, and our Chief will tell us a bit more about them in detail.

Chief Wells: Good evening everybody. Thank you so much for having us up here. It is certainly one of the rewarding things as a Police Chief to be able to bring new people on board after interviewing people and seeing all of the talent that's out there. As we've seen in the United States, there's been a lot of movement where people, this is a time in our society where people move jobs a lot and that has been certainly no difference in police work, and it's been difficult to acquire candidates and so we're always on the lookout for rising stars, as you could say; we want to hire the best people because as we've always had as a tradition here in Springdale you can hire somebody and train a person to do a job, but you want to hire people that have good character when they come in the door, and that's certainly what we have here in these two fine officers. So, just to tell you a little bit about them here first. I'll start with Emma, ladies first. Both of these officers are hometown people; not hometown Springdale, but hometown where they're from, but they're hometown now here in Springdale. Emma (Puterbaugh) was born in Madeira, was raised there, and went to Madeira High School. She then went to the Florida Gulf Coast University and graduated in 2020 with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. She has worked both for Christ Hospital in security as well as another hometown in the Madeira Police Department as an auxiliary officer. She completed the Great Oaks Police Academy in 2021. She is joined here by her family, her brother Daniel, and her sisters Katie and Abbey, and her parents, and grandma here as well. Kind of a fun fact is that we have, obviously, a long history of ladies being in our Police Department, and Emma is currently our eighth sworn female officer and one of three female supervisors on the department, so we're very proud of her for joining us in that regard. So, welcome aboard Emma. (applause)

Christopher Thomas is a native of Colerain Township. Went to Northwest High School. Chris went into the military and served in the Air Force as a Police Officer, serving as a K9 Officer, and upon his honorable discharge, he became a Corrections Officer in the Hamilton County Sheriff's office in 2015, and as a result of that appointment, he eventually went to the Police Academy at Butler Tech in Butler County to obtain his Ohio Peace Officer Certification. In 2017, he joined the ranks of the Colerain Township Police Department. One of the things we talked about when he was coming on board here, why did he want to be a Springdale Police Officer? Well, he was so impressed when he worked here before, I'll talk about that here in a second when Colerain Township was over here working, he loved Tortilleria Garcia so much, he said, "That's my link to the City of Springdale." He has a daughter Analiyah who is here with us tonight as well, and what I really wanted to say also is that you know when everything happened when Kaia Grant was killed in the line of duty, Colerain Township stepped up so incredibly to assist us, one of the things we talked about during Chris' interview was that he was so

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Chief Wells (continued): impressed with the people here and just the way the City responded and the way the citizens were here. He was not looking to leave Colerain Township. He was very happy there. But, he knew that if he ever had an opportunity to come to Springdale, that he would jump on it. I can't tell you how happy I am that you're here. So, thank you very much for thinking of us that way. We are very glad to have you both. Thank you. (applause) With that said, I'd like to invite the Mayor down here to do the swearing in.

Mayor Webster swore in Officers Puterbaugh and Thomas. (applause)

Chief Wells: Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to thank our staff as well for coming in, especially those members that were not working tonight, to come in and show their support for our staff. It's critically important that we support each other in these times and I really wanted to say how much I appreciate them being here, and you probably also noticed that a couple of our officers were sporting beards. How times change. I relented, but we appreciate the support on that too. Again, thank you so much for your time tonight. We appreciate it and we appreciate you allowing us to come up here and share this good news with you. Have a good evening.

President Vanover: Thank you. (applause) Thank you Chief (Wells).

Presentation – Hamilton County Solid Waste Management Plan Update for 2024-2038

Mr. Johnson: Absolutely. But, first of all, before I do the introductions of who I am and why I'm here, I did want to say, when I was offered the opportunity to have them do their ceremony first, I'm so grateful. I've been in public service for 15 years. This is the first time I've seen an officer sworn in, and that is definitely very heart touching. So, thank you for that.

President Vanover: Thank you.

Mr. Johnson: So, how do you top that (laughter), right? You talk about solid waste. So, introductions; I am Brad Johnson, I'm the Director of the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services. So, let me kind of explain what my role is and what Environmental Services does here in Hamilton County. So, as Director, well, actually I'm going to talk about resource, but I'm actually in charge of two agencies. I'm in charge of the Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency, which oversees the rules and regulations for air quality here in southwest Ohio. So, that agency actually does give counties beyond just Hamilton County, but, I'm here to talk today about Hamilton County Resource. You probably remember Hamilton County Recycling; its solid waste district. They did go through a rebranding about a year ago, and it was to bring more attention to the tenets of recycling; reduce, reuse, and recycle. We'll talk about our role, but the main mission that they do is they were established back in the late 80's under a State mandate to reduce the amount of waste going to our landfills, which, in this case, is Rumpke. So, when you see the commercials and when we're out helping communities and schools, we're the entity that is trying to; it's a non-regulatory agency that is looking to promote business and personal changes to reduce the amount of waste that we produce. So, one of the things that we're charged to do, it's actually the most technical responsibilities we have to stay in compliance with the State rules, is we have to do the solid waste plan. It's a 15 year plan and we have to update it every five years. So, I don't know if any of you have been here, but five years ago, we went through the same process. So, rather than have you have to read all 200+ pages of that, I just wanted to give you a very, very quick overview of what that plan is. So, to kind of go over a little bit more resource of what it does for Springdale and your community, we provide lots of grants, so, when people, businesses, schools and the communities when you have ideas to reduce waste and it needs maybe some seed money, we have those grant opportunities. This year, we also included \$1 million dollars for large projects, so, we're going through those right now. We had 21 applicants on that one. We do a lot of outreach programs with the communities, so, that's where we actually go out, like I said, you'll see actual commercials, you'll see flyers. In the past, they've had mascots, but that's kind of the "warm and fuzzy" part of it where we try to get people to change their behaviors. Part of that is also going out to the schools and doing education with the schools. On the dirtier side when we don't have compliance, again, we're not really an enforcement agency, but we realize that there was a lag. You can only tell people so many times not to do open dumping; scrap tires are an issue, so we realize there was a void where we did have to

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Mr. Johnson (continued): go after certain businesses and individuals, so we implemented the Environmental Enforcement Program in 2018, and we have a deputy sheriff; that's his entire role is to go out and reduce the amount of open dumping in Hamilton County which includes Springdale. And then, the last one that you're probably familiar with is our drop off programs. That's our yard trimmings, Christmas trees, household hazardous waste. We just had an event last week that we promote and support those campaigns as well. But, again, I'm here to just to quickly talk about the plan. I want to give you an idea about the timeline of how this works. It's a very, very long process we started in 2001. Wrote the plan. It includes public comments. It includes comments from schools, a lot of input so that plan is complete. We submitted it to Ohio EPA for their review. Comments have come back; very small changes. It's more just making sure numbers match, those kinds of things. In fact, we got some big compliments; I'll show you what those are. The last step is where you come in. That's where we actually ratify the plan; we send it back to Ohio EPA with those changes, and with the support of our communities, that plan will go into implementation, and five years from now we'll do the same thing. So, if you have any questions too, please feel to interrupt me as we go through this. The way that works is we just need 60% of the population to ratify the plan. In the past we've received 100%. I don't expect anything less than that this year. The City of Cincinnati is required because it does require the largest municipality. Residential Recycling Incentive; I just wanted to make sure you're aware that that's a program that's been around since we started the district back in the late 80's. That is going to continue. That's where money comes back to the community based on the amount of waste that you're recycling, so that will continue. In fact, we changed it to where if our tonnage goes up, so, if we get more revenue, we actually will put even more funding into that account to get back out to the communities. That was something that we got feedback from other communities that wanted to do that. The other big thing I wanted. This plan is very heavily focused on businesses. The last couple of decades, they've been focused a lot on residential, and multi-family, those kinds, and, to be honest with you, they've made a lot of progress, but we really need to tap into this because 68% of our waste we're seeing go to Rumpke is actually from businesses. So, we're investing more money to start focusing on that that we hired a business specialist who, her job is to going to be just go out and provide that technical support and to get more businesses to get on board with that. This is another big one. We're the first one in the State of Ohio to do this. In fact, the Ohio EPA commended us, and, I think they're going to be looking at us as a model to show the rest of the State how we can include diversity/equity inclusion roles into your plan. What that means is you probably have heard a lot about DEI training and we realized that there probably might be some voids in our program that we're not even aware of; some systemic things that have happened. So, this plan really focuses how do we make sure that every community, even marginalized communities get represented. So, part of that is we have a policy committee to make sure that we have the right representation on there. We've already started that process. Other things we can do, like I just mentioned, we had a drop off program. What if you have a community that doesn't have a lot of vehicles. How do we get that waste accounted for? So, this plan is looking at that in-depth. And, that wasn't a requirement; that was something that we did on our own. So, that's a really, really quick nutshell of the plan. I'd be happy to go into detail because I'm kind of a solid waste guru. It sounds weird, but, that's (laughter), Jeff (Agricola) can vouch on that right Jeff? I won a State award when I worked with Jeff on storm water with dumpsters. So, it all comes together. But, if you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them. I will say that I'm not the solid waste manager. Michelle Balz is our Solid Waste Manager. She reports to me, and, if you're not familiar with how we're structured, I report directly to the County Administrator, Jeff Aluotto, and then, of course, Jeff goes to the County Commissioner, so that's how we're structured.

Mr. Ramirez: Thank you for coming in Mr. Johnson. Quick question; how are the numbers accumulated as concerning the individual communities with recycling? How do we know where we stand?

Mr. Johnson: Good question. So, and I think I actually even got your numbers. So, I will say it's not a perfect science. It's voluntary, unfortunately. It's not required for businesses to submit their numbers to us, so what we've done is we've created a really good relationship with a lot of our businesses throughout Hamilton County, so, like Procter and Gamble, Garden Street Recycling, they have really big numbers, so what you do is you have to get those numbers reported every year and then it goes to the Ohio EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), so, to answer your question though, on a community basis, how are you doing, we keep track of all of that. So, Jeff (Agricola), you probably submit some of those numbers to us, but the

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Mr. Johnson (continued): Administration here works with us and they submit those numbers to us and we actually have that. So, let me see if I have yours. Yes, I do. So, Springdale in 2021, your diversion rate, we call it the diversion rate so the amount of waste that you're keeping out, was 16.58%. That's right in the middle, so, there are communities that do better, but there are certainly a lot of communities that need to come up to where you are. So, there's always room for improvement, but that did, so, the other thing, that recycling incentive program I was talking about, residential recycling, that money, you had almost \$9,000 come back to Springdale because of that. So, the better you do with that number, the more money that you'll get. Does that answer your question?

Mr. Ramirez: That's great. Thank you.

Mr. Johnson: Okay. You're welcome.

Mr. Jacobs: I appreciate you coming out as well and I'm struck by the fact that, I even wrote it down in my notes. Solid Waste Guru should be the next great band name or album (laughter). I just think it's perfect and you're the first guy to say it. Whether it's for our residents or myself, could you trace, without too much specificity, whatever you're comfortable with, when I throw that can or cardboard in the orange bin, and it's collected by you, who is it then transferred to, what's the endgame for that waste? Is it a dozen answers? Again, whatever level you're comfortable with.

Mr. Johnson: That's a great question, and you kind of set me up because we are working, literally, this week on a commercial that's going to show cardboard; what happens to it here locally. So, here's the big thing that a lot of people don't understand. Recycling is very based on the community you live in. So, how you recycle here in the Miami Valley/Greater Cincinnati area is completely different than how recycling is done on the west coast and the east coast. So, cardboard, specifically, here in Cincinnati, goes to what's called a materials recycling facility, a recovery facility, it's called a MERF, for short. It's in St. Bernard; Rumpke owns it. Cardboard is the first thing that is separated out. It gets bailed, and, believe it or not, we actually have, it's called the Cincinnati Cardboard Recycling Company. It's down in, I believe Columbia-Tusculum area, close to Hafner Construction Demolition and Debris Landfill; if you're familiar with that; Kellogg area, over in there. So, they take it, and to your last point, it goes to multiple locations is my understanding, but, I couldn't even tell you exactly where it goes from there. So, it usually goes, I know there's a company up in Dayton called Wausau, they use recycled paper to make toilet paper, and those types of products. So, yes, it goes multiple areas, but cardboard specifically, a lot of it happens right here in Hamilton County. So, good question. Plastics are a little more complicated.

Mr. Anderson: I love the enthusiasm for solid waste. I still think that's wonderful. A lot of what you've talked about tonight is around recycling, like after it's been recovered. I keep hearing reports over and over again about recycling having really diminishing returns and there's a reason it's last on the list of the R3's. Are there similar programs or enthusiastic solid waste people focused on the reduce and reuse portion?

Mr. Johnson: That's funny, I feel like I'm talking to experts here because you're right; that is exactly why it's last because it's the least important. First, you want to reduce the amount of materials you're bringing in, and then if you don't have that ability, you want to try and reuse it and then recycle is the last resort. Yes, the focus has been primarily on reducing and reusing now. In fact, there's been a lot of press we've been getting lately. We've been really focusing on food diversion. So, that fits more into the reuse, but it also is reduce. Because, when people go out and purchase their food, lots of times they're purchasing too much. So, yes, a lot of that is behavioral change, and we're working with Kroger and other entities to see what we can do, but, we did hire on a full-time food diversion specialist that does that. And, I can tell you that the passion for that runs even deeper than what I could show you. It's amazing the staff that we have that does that kind of work.

President Vanover: You can go ahead and continue your presentation.

Mr. Johnson: Were there any other questions?

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President Vanover: No, the lights have died down, so, we'll let you build up and we'll get some more.

Mr. Johnson: That's all I have actually.

President Vanover: Oh, okay.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, so, unless you have any other questions for me. The Administration is great to work with here, and, like I said, I know Jeff (Agricola) working with him in the past, so we appreciate everything that Springdale does with us.

President Vanover: I will note that this past weekend, Mrs. McNear and I wandered down into the creek. And, I was surprised because we only, I think we only had three tires; three or four and I know in past excursions it's been a whole lot higher, but that seems to be, well, I see them down at the curb for Rumpke to take, and of course, they will lay for a while, and we've even had some wander on the street on their own, but, is there anything in the works that's changing, or may incentivizing how we handle old tires?

Mr. Johnson: Right now, unfortunately, not too much. Are you familiar with the facility that Rumpke owns, I believe it's up in New Miami? Rumpke is the main; they take most of the scrap tires here, and there is good news. They're able to shred those and use those as a drainage layer at their landfill, so I do know that locally they get used a lot for that here, but, unfortunately, I'm not familiar with any. I do know there's some experimental things where they're working with putting it into asphalt, but I don't know where that stands right now. I know that's more in the experimental stage. But, yes, unfortunately there's not a lot right now that I'm familiar with. But, I will say this about scrap tires; scrap tires, if you have any dumping or anything, we have Deputy Peak, the enforcement program I was talking about, that's where he's been heavily focused and one of the things he's found that's really interesting is scrap tires is unfortunately involved in somewhat, I won't say organized crime, but there's a lot more involved, like drug activity, those kinds of things, so, by getting into that, it's allowed other law enforcement opportunity to kind of break up some those issues that we've had. Deputy Peak has done a fantastic job over the last four years now working on that.

President Vanover: Okay. Great. I don't see any more lights, so you've answered all their questions.

Mr. Johnson: Well, Jeff (Agricola), I am going to be leaving, so if you do have any questions, don't hesitate to reach to Michelle (Balz) or me, your Administration has our contact information, but, again, we enjoy working with the community.

President Vanover: Well, thank you Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson: Yes. Thanks for having me. I appreciate it.

President Vanover: Thank you.

Communications

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None

Communications form the Audience

Ms. Matheny: Julie Matheny here on behalf of Charter Revision just to announce we're going to have our annual meeting two weeks from tonight, November 16th at 6:30 p.m. It's just an annual meeting; it should take five minutes, and we'll be meeting in one of the conference rooms. Thank you.

President Vanover: Thank you.

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Ordinances and Resolutions

Ordinance No. 33-2022

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CLERK OF COUNCIL/FINANCE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO FOR FIRE HYDRANT REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT SERVICES

Mr. Anderson made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 33-2022; Mrs. Ghantous seconded.

Mr. Ramirez: Do we see any increased costs by moving to this system versus doing it ourselves?

Mr. Jones: Yes, there will be an increase in costs as opposed to doing it, but they'll do it, and they'll accept the liability if there's a problem with something and it will allow our staff to do other things. We will definitely stay involved, but this is more on the detailed complicated stuff. The routine stuff our staff will hand themselves.

Mr. Ramirez: Thank you.

Mr. Hawkins: And then, the agreement indicates that we're responsible for flaggers or traffic control. I'm not sure how often that would even come up, but, if it we had to have flaggers, would that be Public Works that would take care of that, or would we hire somebody outside?

Mr. Jones: It would need to be a pretty complicated matter for us to get into that, but, to your response, if our guys can handle it internally at Public Works, we would certainly do that, and if not, we would contract it outside.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you.

Ordinance No. 33-2022 passes with seven affirmative votes.

Resolution No. R19-2022

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE UPDATE OF THE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R19-2022; Mrs. Ghantous seconded.

Resolution No. R19-2022 passes with seven affirmative votes.

Resolution No. R20-2022

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE CREATION OF A COMMUNITY ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT IN THE CITY OF SPRINGDALE PURSUANT TO OHIO REVISED CODE SECTION 4301.80

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R20-2022; Mr. Hawkins seconded.

Resolution No. R20-2022 passes with seven affirmative votes.

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Old Business

Mayor Webster: We've got a couple of things I don't know whether they come under old business or meetings and announcements, but, I would like to announce that our Annual Veteran's Day Ceremony will be held Friday, next Friday the 11th at 1:00 p.m., down at the Memorial on Route 4. We're very honored this year to have one of Springdale's own residents as a speaker; someone from Heritage Hill, Mr. Steve Conrad. So, we're looking forward to that. And, also, on December 3rd, you've probably seen the signs go up this week, our second annual Santa Run. It starts at 9:00 on December 3rd. We also this year are going to enhance the activities to include a Christmas Bazaar, or Vendor Village I believe Elizabeth (Johnson) is calling it. But, anyway, it's a place where you can rent a booth and display your wares, cookies, candy, consumables, crafts; whatever you want to sell within reason, and that will take place concurrent with the 5K run, and I believe that lasts until 1:00 p.m., from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., and all the proceeds from the Santa 5K Run and the Bazaar go to SOS, and we'd just like to remind everyone that we are in full SOS mode once again. Last year, we helped over 200 children, I think it was 92 families, and this year we're hoping to be able to even help more than that if the need is there, we certainly will be prepared to address the need. So, if you feel inclined to help us out, we'd appreciate it. You can call our Health Department at 346-5725, and "five or six"? (addressing Mrs. Boggs)

Mayor Webster: Two five or two six?

Mrs. Boggs: Five seven two five.

Mayor Webster: Five seven two five, and if you want to adopt a family, that's fine, or if you just want to make a donation, that's fine. We also are going to have food bins scattered throughout the City. I think we'll have 20 or 30 of those out and so if you're so inclined to help us with that food, we'd appreciate that also. So, anyway, thank you, and keep SOS in mind as you go about your holiday shopping and so forth. Thank you very much.

Mr. Anderson: I just have one item to bring up under Old Business. It's something that I promised a resident I would bring up. Two weeks ago, at our last meeting, a resident had sent a communication with a number of questions for Administration about fees. I had followed up with that resident after the meeting about a week later just to make sure that he had gotten the questions answered he wanted. And, Administration has gotten back to him. I believe they've addressed his questions as much as could be. And, it's really an Administrative item. For those that might not be aware, the questions were really about the Rec Center fees that we had discussed the meeting before. Some increases that were normal increases. And, he had a number of questions, very detail-oriented about how will the fees be used, will they be restricted, will there be an income sliding scale, monthly billing, and how that market comparison was done. I'm not asking to bring up those discussions; the answers from Administration are available for anyone that wasn't on that thread and is welcome to request them. But, what the resident had asked is just to give an opportunity if there is anyone else on Council that had any comments about his question. I had offered to bring it up in Old Business just so there was that option. It sounded important that at least the question be asked in the form that he asked it in. So, in the spirit of that open communication, I had offered to bring up this point. So, that's what I'm doing now; fulfilling that promise he had asked me to bring it up. So, if anyone has any comments, or would like to speak to those, it's certainly an option. I think Administration responded and I think it's all set, but, a promise made, is a promise kept in my world.

Mr. Jacobs: I would remind anybody that, in this capacity, mostly Council is not in the loop on this decision. We can speak about it, we can discuss it. We certainly can, and we can ask questions. That being said, of all of the things I've heard in terms of reactions to the increases, the thing that interested me the most is the idea of incentivizing the year-long membership. And, in the answers to the resident's questions, Administration said that that was under consideration, and if I could just throw in my two cents, that I'm a supporter of that. We could incentivize residents to buy the full year as opposed to month-to-month and I think that works better for everybody. But, just again, it's two cents of a member of Council whereas, this is an Administrative decision. Thanks.

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Mr. Ramirez: First off, I read the comments and the questions in the comments and I agree with the answers that were put forward, and, also, on discussion that Mr. Jacobs was speaking of, I believe an annual payment would be in the best interest of the City. I can't imagine sending out monthly bills, especially since these items are going to be ten or 15 dollars to every resident that's a member of the community. I just think we'd be better off just staying with an annual payment. Thank you.

Mr. Hawkins: I'll reiterate what has been said. This is not a decision by Council; it's an Administrative Executive issue. I do think when this matter got discussed before the meeting two weeks ago; I can't remember if it's been a month or so. There was some detail that was given in terms of how the Administration came to the conclusions that they did, and what they were targeting in terms of their ideas. The responses that Administration gave to the resident, to me, indicated that it's still a fluid thing, and it sounds like the Administration is going to be reviewing matters as it goes along, and there may be things that evolve as a result of things that they see, so, I was happy to see that in the responses that I think the Administration is going to be responsive to how things go moving forward. Thanks.

New Business

President Vanover: I don't see any lights, well, I'm going to bring to the floor, in reference to this letter, unbeknownst to me, it was a surprise that Council did not have a policy on letters. And, I think that the time is here that we need to address that. Since I've got the floor, and the mic right now, I've had letters sent to me that were unsigned. I have a file for those, but if you can't sign your name, I have no further interaction with that. Quite honestly, I don't know who. But, it also brings up the question that letters come in, and in this day and age, just because it says it's from an individual or a person, we have no way of verifying that. And, we have no point of reference or a response. Mr. Braun, you can jump in here at any point in time. Quite honestly, if this was, in Mr. Hawkins world, a court of law, somebody made an accusation, you have no ability to cross examine that statement. So, my thought, at this point, is moving forward with Council's concurrence, letters come in; if they're anonymous, we'll do an anonymous letter file and, you know, that's that. If they are addressed, they will come in and everybody will get a copy of that letter. If there is some action, whatever department will see this, and you know, move it there. But, I mean, it can come in and any letter can make any accusation. Personal, non-personal, whatever. And, quite honestly, you have no point to question because you don't have that ability. It's different when we have an individual in front of us, then we know who they are and we know we can ask questions and interact. So, with that, I've got some lights here. I'll open it up.

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: I have a couple of things on that. Number one, with the email that we got the other day; it was all Administrative. It had zero to do with us. So, if we would have read that out loud, we all would have just pretty much...there probably would have been a discussion, but, overall, there's nothing that any of us right here, one at a time, can do. There's nothing in that meeting that could have been addressed right away that says, "This is the completion of this thought". We could have discussed everything that he had brought up, but, to be honest, it was easier for the Administration to answer it since all of the questions were Administrative and weren't for us. They wrote an email to the City Council for an Administrative situation. It should have gone to Administration, and I'm glad that it did, and I'm glad that Administration got the answer for him. The other thing is that I had a question. I know that we still have Kathy (McNear) for another year and a month, but, once that position is gone, who are we going to have read everything in general? Like, are we reading the letters, we're reading everything? Who, when we no longer have the Clerk of Council here, as the Clerk of Council, what does that mean for us in general? Because, I know that you're saying that we just don't read anything out loud? That's what I want to know is what is happening here, what is the plan, even if it's a rough plan right now?

President Vanover: That's my plan, and that's part of the, or, that's my thought. And, that's part of the reasoning behind it. Because, we'll have somebody that will be reading the legislation and that, and we do get some...

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: And that's required to be read?

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President Vanover: The legislation?

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: Yes.

President Vanover: Yes.

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: Okay, no, I'm not saying for me, I'm just saying it in general for because I want to make sure everybody understands why we're doing everything we are.

President Vanover: Yes, that is required. And, from time to time we get communications from anywhere from Duke Energy to Solid Waste Management, whatever. I think there we would put those in meetings and announcements and that information is passed on to people. Some of it is, you know, well, we have consolidation, you know with the electric, so, that program is there, but still some of the information, you know, it is vital information or important information for people to get. So, that's kind of where my thought process has kind of lead is that letters come in, we get a copy of each one of the letters individually. If you choose to respond, that's fine. As in this case, we were talking, this was out of the scope of Council's world. We're a legislative body. We do not dictate daily operations. Nor, do we tell the Police Department what fines should be, or Fire Department, you know, their operations. So, well, the Fire Department is a little bit different. But, Police Department is, if you break it down according to the federal government, we are the legislative body, the Administration and the Mayor are the executive branch, and the Police Department is the judicial branch. And, we each have our roles and guardrails that keep us in our own lane so to speak.

Mr. Braun: First, I would just point out that the charter amendment that was passed just to remind Council actually addresses all of who is going to be reading legislation and who will be accepting letters. The duties that previously were assigned to the Clerk of Council/Finance Director now shift to the Clerk of Council, who is not elected, but is appointed. So, I just wanted to remind everyone of that. The second thing that I wanted to point out and I know as a trial lawyer, Mr. Hawkins appreciates this, but, one of the nice things that you do is you have the ability to confront and cross examine someone when they appear at a podium. And, you know, I can only speak from the experience in the other communities that I have represented, but, often times they don't allow for random letters that are unverified to come in and be read for that very reason. One, you don't have a way to verify without going through the arduous task of reaching out, calling them, saying, "Is this you?", and typically what they'll do is they'll be handled administratively by staff. The only exception I've seen to that as I've pointed out to the Administrator when he brought this to my attention, is in zoning matters, because, in zoning matters you're trying to create a record that will eventually appealed, and, so, they will allow people to appear by letter, if you will, so that it becomes a part of the record, and they don't necessarily read them, they become part of the record. But, the other thing that I think you might want to think about is we had a situation three years ago, I believe it was, where you were receiving hundreds of form letters from groups. If we had a policy that allowed for letters to be read, we would be required to read potentially hundreds of form letters over and over so that everyone became part of the minutes of this meeting. So, I think those are some things to think about and, you know, as you decide what policy you want to adopt as a Council, I think those are some things to think about, but, obviously, Administration is in the best position to answer factual questions and I would also caution you that it's always risky to answer them from the dais, especially when they're seeking numbers or data because they're going to hold you as elected officials probably most responsible for that information and staff is in a position to go back to their office, find the data in the individual departments, and provide that accurately. So, if that helps you with your decision, I just wanted to provide that.

Mr. Jacobs: I wanted to clarify; are you seeking a decision on a policy change tonight?

President Vanover: Well, right now it's discussion, and if you want, we can come back in two weeks and make the call. But, I think that we need to, we've reached a point that we need to get this on record so to speak. So, you know, I'll take whatever direction you so desire to move, but, right now we're strictly in discussion.

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Mr. Anderson: I agree. I think it's a great idea to update the policy. It would have helped me even in this case. Right? Just naturally if somebody sends a letter, in this most recent example, it was addressed to Council and Administration, and I'm guessing; I don't know, but, I'm guessing the thinking is because we have some oversight in direction and control over how the budget is approved and in budget season that might be why, I don't know though, you'd have to ask the resident why he thought why we would address that. I do think it's a great idea to have a policy for it because I think informally in the past, at least from my understanding, most letters would be read if they were signed and weren't obviously aggressive, if that makes sense, right? Those letters would be passed on, but, if there was a point to be made, historically we've read them. I think having a policy reduces the confusion and it makes it real clear, right? If you send a letter, you can get a response in a letter. Just because you send a letter doesn't mean that we spend an hour talking about it right? We have the opportunity to have those discussions here and they're much more productive if we can ask clarifying questions, right? And, this most recent example a couple of clarifying questions could have cleared the whole thing up. So, it's not an example hold up, but I agree, a policy would be great. I certainly support anonymous letters shouldn't be read, but, I'd like to receive them. The one piece I would want to encourage is if we get that letter distributed, at least until it becomes onerous, I know I'd like to see the responses too in the same way, right? Just so I know it's addressed. It's just part of following up would help because if there's something there for me to learn from it, I'd like to. So, if the policy, and that wouldn't have to be in the policy; that just might be a practice, right? As the policy is as you described, but, in practice if you could share the responses too, it helps us be better advocates for the City.

President Vanover: That's fine.

Mr. Hawkins: The idea of having a policy with regard to correspondence makes sense. The biggest thing for me is that we need to be consistent. And, so, and I think that was probably the issue that the resident had in terms of an expectation that the letter was going to be read because that's what folks have seen year after year. And, so, if there's a policy and it's going to set a consistent practice, and it takes care of the expectations of everybody, I'm in full support of that. Not to go down the potential wormhole, but, as we talk about issues and problems that we may have and folks come through and almost filibuster, have a bunch of individuals come down and want to speak about the Goldfish Swim from all parts of the state, I don't know how important it is to set standards in terms of how long an individual may talk, or if it's something that Mr. Braun can speak to this if it's something that we can address and we've done that sort of before with some very big meetings, whether it's sidewalks or needle exchanges, or what have you, where, for those specific meetings the President (of Council) will say, "We're going to limit to whatever amount of time". But, those kinds of things may come up as well. So, as long as we're consistent, I think it makes sense. I have no problem, obviously if it's an anonymous letter, it shouldn't be read. If it's a signed letter and the policy is going to be that it's going to be distributed to elected officials, and not read, and we're going to be consistent with that, I don't necessarily have a problem with that either.

Mr. Jacobs: I would just say for me if we're going to create a policy and then vote on it, I'd like to see it in writing. I wouldn't feel comfortable moving right now on anything like that.

President Vanover: Sure. That's fine.

Mr. Jacobs: And, I think we've got to be clear that if what I'm hearing is the direction to go is we're saying that you cannot address, whether it be Council or Administration without being here in person, and expect others to hear it. I think it's just important to say that. Because, that's the tone of what we're saying here so, if that's what it is, that's what it is. And, if Council supports it, okay. But, I wouldn't want to vote on that right now is my two cents.

President Vanover: That's fine. And, I, well, quite honestly, if it is that important you should be here. It's too easy to, you know, send a letter. We all, you know, prioritize our activities, and if it's important, we make time for it. And, so, that's, again, that's my input on that.

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Mr. Ramirez: Certainly, I agree with the direction we're going with this and the ideas that the other Council people have. But, one other subject I think maybe we need to address if we're going to come up with rules, currently, letters come into the BZA (Board of Zoning Appeals) or Planning (Commission). It may be a neighbor that's objecting to a zoning appeal, or maybe they are in favor of it. We always read those letters. So, we need to stipulate are we going to apply this to those letters as well, or are we going to exempt them from the reading of non-signed letters.

President Vanover: Well, as Mr. Braun pointed out that those typically in planning issues, whether it's BZA (Board of Zoning Appeals), or Planning (Commission), they want those to be part of the record because we are having, you know, public hearings and that stuff, so, I would say that that would be, my feeling is Council sets their rules, and we let Planning (Commission) and BZA (Board of Zoning Appeals) determine theirs as long as they're not breaking the law, and that's what we pay Mr. Braun to keep us honest on that. But, that that would be right here, and this discussion is focused entirely on Council letters coming in to us, and how they, from this point forward, will be treated.

Mr. Hawkins: Two things; in terms of I'm sensitive to people that may not be able to get here, and to me, elected officials are still going to get the information. It's not, and I hope folks aren't writing a letter just to let it be heard by everybody else if the issue is you want to hear the elected officials and administration address the issue. If we get the information, we still can do that without it being read. The other thing is in terms of responses, even if someone is standing there, there should be no...no one should feel an obligation on this dais to respond to somebody just because they're asked the question. The school board, I don't know if they still do, but they have a policy that they were not going to respond at that time just to make sure that they could go through and have time to think about things. And, we've had some times where Administration may have numbers at the tip of their fingers because they just were working on something and they can go, "Here's your response." But, nobody should feel obligated to do that. And, there's times also where we've sat up here and there's been an immediate response, and someone comes in here and says, "Hey I got this problem", and Administration goes through and examines it, and things aren't always as they were purported to be. So, we shouldn't feel an obligation to respond to anybody coming in immediately.

Mr. Braun: I think what we're hearing, I think Mr. Jacobs was very clear about the fact that you'd like to see something in the future, not necessarily a decision made right now. If it's the will of Council, I can work with Administration to prepare a very simple; a clear-written policy. I don't think it needs to be too detailed, but, and maybe address also what Mr. Hawkins indicated about a time limit that can be set either by Council, or the Chair. And then, obviously, if there's a presenter that needs additional time, they could petition the Chair, which they do in my other communities, and he will ask or she will ask, "Would you like to allow them additional time to finish?" If it's a meeting where there's maybe not a lot of people signed up. So, if that's the direction, I can work with Administration to bring something back to you. The only question I might ask is do you want that to go through Rules and Law, or just come straight to Council?

President Vanover: To me, it's Council's rules.

Mr. Anderson: I was going to say, according to the charter, Rules and Law is the place to do it if it needed to be complex, but I don't think that applies here. I think we're just doing a simple rule. So my preference is let's get it done soon, and I think that happens faster if we just do it at our next meeting. And, that's by resolution, so it's not even a multi-reading situation. We just adopt it.

Mr. Braun: So, it will probably need to be an ordinance, but you can do it as an emergency if you want. The reason I say that is because it will likely get added in to Chapter 30, which is where your Rules of Procedures for Meetings are. But, I'll prepare that and circulate it.

President Vanover: Okay.

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Mr. Anderson: And, I think it's important what Mr. Hawkins said just because the letter is not being read, doesn't mean it's not being acted on. So, really, the message isn't that we're trying to shut down that communication, we're just saying that to be more efficient, we need to have a consistent policy for it. I think that's important and I don't want that to get lost.

Mayor Webster: Well, Jeff (Anderson) just stole the word I was going to use. I think the key here is consistency, and I think that, you know, we don't want to be in a position of picking and choosing, we like that person, we don't like this person. I think that's bad, so, I think that's a great idea to incorporate it in to Chapter 30, and, so it will be there for everybody to see and abide by it going forward. I also like the point that Mr. Hawkins made about responding to people down here in the well. I think, you know, it's nice if we know the answer, and, not to respond to them, but, at the same time, I don't think any of us, Council or the Administration has an obligation to answer on the spot a questions that's posed from the box there. And, I think we need to make that clear that, you know, if it's something simple; sure, we'll answer it, but, if it's something that needs some research, and we're not absolutely sure about it, then, yes, I think we owe it to ourselves, and the Community to take our time and get back at the next meeting or something.

President Vanover: And, one other point, and some discussion that came up, and this would be communication from the well, basically, that person addressing Council has to be, no, not a resident. Because the problem there becomes like, Mr. Dave Wallace, he's not a resident, so, with that, he couldn't address us. But, that, if there's a question coming from the floor, that that person needs to be there; not receive a text or a phone call, "Hey, ask them this". If you want to know, you be here. Plain and simple. That's my feeling about it. So, I don't see any more lights. Mr. Braun you've been charged. We'll let you do your work, and we'll go on from here.

Meetings and Announcements

Mr. Sullivan-Wisecup: Planning Commission will meet here Tuesday, November 8th at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Anderson: I just wanted to mention that the BZA (Board of Zoning Appeals) meeting for this month has been cancelled. That item was moved to the Planning Commission instead. So, you're welcome, but, there will be no meeting next week.

Mr. Uhl: Civil Service (Commission) will be meeting tomorrow, November 3rd at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Conference Room.

Mr. Jones: I have a couple of announcements, but I wanted to do a clarification real quick if I could. A couple of the Councilmembers had different questions. Regarding the Fire Hydrant Repairs, and I'm sorry this is many minutes ago, but, I just wanted to clarify something. When our staff was doing it, obviously that saves us money. When we would contract out certain things to a third party, what I was trying to articulate is it's going to cost us more money to go through Hamilton County Planning Development Field Operations, but not as much as it would have cost us for another third party. So, I can't remember if it was Mr. Ramirez that asked that question. We actually will save money by going through them, but, if we did the project ourselves, we would save even more money, but then we have quite a bit of skill level over there, but some of those projects get pretty detailed. I just wanted to clarify that. Do I still have the floor for just a moment?

President Vanover: Sure.

Mr. Jones: Real quick, we're still accepting registration for youth basketball and it's about the end, so, if you have kids that are interested, please get there and get that addressed. There will be a basketball clinic November 12th at 10:00 a.m. Thank you.

Mrs. Ghantous: On the fire hydrant repair thing, so, I'm aware that we've had some untimely repairs. This new plan will help with that?

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Mr. Jones: Yes, it should. That has been part of the issue is that we've had, I'm not sure why, but, for example, drivers who become impaired tend to find little red targets, and those tend get taken out and it's quite an expense, first of all, to get it repaired. We always try internally to fix it. Talking about our skilled level at the Fire Department, not the Administrative part. But, if they cannot, then we contract it out. You can get put back quite a distance on a waiting list. We're also told that through Hamilton County those will be prioritized for us. So, our Chief and his staff are very excited about this move for us. Good question.

Communications from the Audience

Ms. Wells: Hello, my name is Katie Wells and I live on Bernhart. I am going to be reading a letter on behalf of Kevin Haugh to you guys today. He would like me to say that

"Letters provide those who can't attend a meeting an opportunity to participate in the democratic process we cherish..."

President Vanover: Wait a minute, we just...

Ms. Wells: *"in this County. I can't take time off from work..."*

(President Vanover struck his gavel to signify that Ms. Wells was out of order)

Ms. Wells: *"I have a firm interest in this City, and what you're telling me is that I don't matter because I'm at work supporting my family. The letter was addressed to Council because it relates to the budget and how that money is going to be spent. The very brief answers I received from Administration indicates these increases will be used for the General Fund, rather than the Rec Department directly."* Thank you guys.

Mayor Webster: I think that's totally out of order.

President Vanover: Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup? Where did she go?

Update on legislation still in development

Mr. Hawkins: As you review your Internal Memorandum, Item Number I was addressed with Ordinance No. 33-2022; An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor and Clerk of Council/Finance Director to Enter into an Agreement with the Board of County Commissioners, Hamilton County, Ohio for Fire Hydrant Repair and Replacement Services. That passed with a 7-0 vote. Item Number II was addressed with Resolution No. R19-2022; A Resolution Approving the Update of the Hamilton County Solid Waste District's Management Plan. That passed with a 7-0 vote. Item Number III was addressed with Resolution No. R20-2022; A Resolution Approving the Creation of a Community Entertainment District in the City of Springdale Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 4301.80. That passed with a 7-0 vote. All other matters are forthcoming.

Recap of legislative items requested for next Council meeting

Mr. Hawkins: There is a request for A Resolution Adopting a Connectivity Plan for the City of Springdale which would be a first reading. There also is a request for a policy regarding correspondence from the public as well. That's it, unless there's anything else from Council or the Administration.

Mr. Jones: Just real quick, on the Board and Commissions, the appointments and so forth, we made sure we put a note below that box. If you would just take a look at that. There are appointments that do require legislative action by this Council. There's a number of appointments that need to be made either by our Mayor or the Council that do not require legislative action. And, I just wanted to point that out because it seems to me that last year the question was brought up, "Is that all we have to do?" We're only putting the ones on there that absolutely require legislative action. So, thank you.

President Vanover: Thank you.

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Adjournment

Mr. Hawkins made a motion to adjourn; Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup seconded and Council adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy McNear
Clerk of Council/Finance Director

Minutes Approved:
Tom Vanover, President of Council

_____, 2022