

President of Council
MICHAEL KLINE

Vice President of Council
TANYA TAYLOR DRAPER

Council Clerk Pro Tem
NICHOLAS AIELLO

Council
JULIE A. BELICH
JOE JARMUSZKIEWICZ
DANIEL KNECHT
VICKI MILLER
KATHLEEN SIVO

City of Willoughby Hills

Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation

Minutes of January 6, 2025

The Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation was called to order on January 6, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. **Council President Kline** presided.

Call to Order 6:00 p.m. (0:08)

ROLL CALL (Audio: 0:19)

Members Present: Councilwoman Kathleen Sivo, Council Vice President Tanya Taylor Draper, Councilwoman Julie A. Belich, Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz, Council President Michael Kline, and Councilwoman Vicki Miller

Also Present: Mayor Hallum, Law Director Michael C. Lucas, and Finance Director Bruce Scott

Absent: City Engineer DiFranco and Councilman Dan Knecht

BEGINNING DISPOSITION: (Audio 0:50)

ORDINANCE 2024-070- SECOND READING

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN CITY SERVICES FOR THE FISCAL PERIOD BEGINNING JANUARY 1ST THROUGH DECEMBER 31ST OF 2025; REPEALING ALL LEGISLATION INCONSISTENT HEREWITH.

- **Finance Director Scott:** My goal is to have the first draft of the 2025 budget distributed by Thursday. With me being ill before the holidays, we're now in year-end. The numbers will make more sense with actual or close to actual 2024 numbers to compare them to. I need a couple more days to get 2024 a lot further along.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Are we having public hearings on this at all?
- **Finance Director Scott:** We need to work with the Council President in terms of scheduling.
- **Council President Kline:** Once we get the budget books, we will give everyone a chance to start reviewing them, and then we will schedule meetings with Fire, Police, Service and the administration. We will sit down with them, ask questions, and get more information as we get closer to voting on the Ordinance. I would think these meetings would come up the latter part of January.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Do you need the old books back?

- **Finance Director Scott:** I do not. If you want to get rid of them we can recycle and reuse them.

ORDINANCE 2025-001- FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AN INCREASE IN COMPENSATION FOR THE POSITION OF FULL-TIME CLERK OF COUNCIL COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2025; REPEALING CONFLICTING LEGISLATION; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **Council President Kline:** The Council Clerk completed his probationary period in early December. He met the expectations we were hoping for and is now a permanent employee. In accordance with the guidelines established for other full-time non-union employees of the City, this Ordinance covers the Council Clerk's compensation for this year. This was not included in the previous Ordinance we had for other non-union employees because the Council Clerk is under the supervision of Council, whereas the other employees are under the supervision of the Mayor. This new compensation was set in accordance to what was given to the other full-time non-union employees, 3% cola and the 75¢ market adjustment.

ORDINANCE 2025-002- FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING PUBLICATION OF CERTAIN NOTICES ON THE CITY WEBSITE AND THEREBY AMEND CERTAIN PROVISION OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES REGARDING PUBLIC NOTICES, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **Council President Kline:** Meeting notifications, Ordinances, Resolutions, and results from various Committees and Commissions are required to be reported in general publication. In the 2023 State by-annual budget, there was a provision in there that stated that cities could meet this requirement by posting this information on their website or social media accounts. This was an involved process to try to figure this out and determine exactly what qualified. We have gotten information in stating that this was permitted. The state budget itself was well over a thousand pages, so finding this was difficult. With the help of the Law Director, we did figure this out and apply. We could benefit from this. Besides the convenience factor, the main benefit is that this will be cost saving because we will not have to pay for the publication of this. I asked the Finance Director to estimate what this might come out to.
- **Finance Director Scott:** Last year, in round numbers, we spent \$9,700 dollars with News Herald. \$6,300 of this was administrative but only \$5,100 related to legislation, meeting notices, engineering notices, BZA, etc. We spent another thousand dollars on a SOM house, about \$2,500 on job postings relevant here, and then another thousand for evidence disposal and invitations.
- **Council President Kline:** There is a fair amount that we will be saving so we want to take advantage of that to the fullest extent with whatever can be posted internally.
- **Councilwoman Belich:** Does this mean that invitations to bid and engineering notices would only go on our website or would those also go out to the News Herald?
- **Council President Kline:** I would think for maximum coverage this would still be in the newspaper but I will defer to the Law Director.
- **Law Director Lucas:** I think the website would be available exclusively. However, in regards to competitive bidding, if you want my legal recommendation, it would be just as the Council President has indicated. If we wanted this in the newspaper or general circulation we could do so. In that

instance, it would be beneficial to have both.

- **Council Vice President:** This will affect notification of public hearings, correct?
- **Law Director Lucas:** Correct. This might take some segmentalization with whomever the Mayor designates to put this on the website. This may increase that person's workload.
- **Council Vice President:** Would this include PCABR, BZA, and all the hearings the City may have?
- **Law Director Lucas:** Yes, I specifically identified in all the sections that were included in that. This does encompass all hearings.
- **Mayor Hallum:** From my perspective, anything that is deemed critical to get out to as many people, I do not think it would only be proper to just put this online. We would all want to get this out to as many people as possible. My vision of this is really for the ordinances that get passed to Council, as well as meetings that are scheduled. Finance Committee Meetings and public hearings should be put in as many places as possible. This Ordinance is mainly to save costs on the everyday stuff that we do.
- **Council Vice President:** This makes me more comfortable, thank you.
- **Councilwoman Miller:** Would this be up to decision of the Mayor as to what goes in the News Herald and what does not?
- **Mayor Hallum:** Anything pertaining to the administration would, however, anything pertaining to Council would fall under Council leadership. If a public hearing was taking place during a Council Meeting, Council leadership would make this decision, whereas if a hearing was taking place in anything administration related such as PCABR, this would be my responsibility. If there is something that Council believes is important to be included, I would love to hear that from you all.
- **Councilwoman Miller:** I am still going over this because I know that there are a lot of people that see and read that we have a Council meeting on this day at a certain time. I want to make sure we appeal to all demographics. I know this is also included in the Newsletter. I just want to make sure that the people are getting what they need. Residents, if you want to contact me to tell me what you think of this that would be great so we know which way you like to receive this information.
- **Mayor Hallum:** We also post everything at City Hall, so if Council decides to pass this, we will watch to see how it is working. If there are any issues, we can certainly tweak and change this to make sure that this is working okay. We all need to be vigilant on the effectiveness and impact of this.

ORDINANCE 2025-003-FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS, PART 11-PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, TITLE THREE-CODE ADMINISTRATION, CHAPTER 1111 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW PROCEDURES, SECTION 1111.02 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW, BY AMENDMENT TO PARAGRAPH (D) REQUIRING TEMPORARY SIGN NOTIFICATION OF THE COMMENCEMENT OF ANY DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW PROCESS UNDER CHAPTER 1111, EXCLUDING THEREFROM AREAS ZONED UNDER THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT B-3 HIGH DENSITY MIXED USE CLASSIFICATION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **Law Director Lucas:** This is the third draft of this Ordinance. The key point is to make sure that residents, in areas of potential development under the development plan are aware that a development is going to be coming. The last Ordinance that was passed, under my craftsmanship, provided that anything that required the development plan required a sign to be put into place. Notifications of that are a work in progress as indicated by the Council Vice President. One of the points that came up was that in the area of Loehmann's Plaza, development plans for new occupancy are required. It seemed that it is not the most pressing need to have a sign up where a store used to be. That is in the Zoning B3 classification. That was excluded specifically from the prior requirement for any development. I also spoke with the City Engineer about this, and we are still looking at something, but I definitely wanted to have this on the agenda.
- **Council Vice President:** Sorry to bring this to the attention of Council yet again. Over the course, after we passed this last year, and over the course of PCABR activities going forward, I discovered that Loehmann's plaza was being directed to erect a sign about the new Chipotle coming. The whole idea of this Ordinance was born out of the idea that residents want to be involved and want to know when things are changing in their neighborhood. While I am not speaking for all the residents who live there, I have lived across from Loehmann's Plaza for 16 years. I do not need to know that a new building is coming because it is not going to change my neighborhood. There are already buildings there and businesses are coming and going. It is not going to affect my life when something comes and goes. Whereas, this was born out of the frustrations of the residents who were getting May Pines and West Pine developments in their neighborhoods. Their neighborhoods were changing. The Loehmann's Plaza neighborhoods are not changing. The whole idea was to make sure that the residents were notified and involved in voicing their opinions with things that were changing in their neighborhood. I used that term because I want to emphasize that is the meaning of what this Ordinance is about. This is about the need to disqualify business areas, not just Loehmann's Plaza. I don't know if B3 covers 91 and 6. I don't think the residents think that things are going to change because a business goes out at 6 and 91. This is not necessary and not anything that the City needs to legislate. Loehmann's Plaza does not necessarily need to put up a sign to inform residents that something is coming because they know something is coming. That is what this is all about. With all the changes and updates, I wanted to be clear about not including the business areas. This just did not get communicated correctly.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Will this Ordinance replace all the other amended Ordinances that we were talking about before?
- **Law Director Lucas:** This Ordinance concerns its application within Section 1111.02 Development Plan Review, specifically paragraph B. This will be the newly revised and updated version.
- **Council Vice President:** This is the only thing that changes. All the other issues and points that we discussed as a group are still there. The only difference is the B3.

RESOLUTION 2025-001-FIRST READING

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE A THEN AND NOW CERTIFICATE AND TO AUTHORIZE THE FINANCE DIRECTOR TO DRAW A WARRANT FOR THE ORDERS OR CONTRACTS ASSOCIATED WITH SUCH CERTIFICATE FOR LEGAL FEES AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **Council President Kline:** I would like to ask the Finance Director if he could give us a quick

summary of the then and now Resolution.

- **Finance Director Scott:** It is essentially the timing of the submittal of bills. It is more than my spending authority of \$3,000. Anything over this would require me to need Council's approval to pay the invoice.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Is there anyway of figuring out the specifics for all of these? I see names and non-salary. This is very general; it is not specific of what the charges are for. Are they actual cases, lawsuits, legal issues within the City etc.?
- **Finance Director Scott:** I think it was 18 pages worth of backup. I did not want to provide a heavy amount of paper, but I can certainly provide this.
- **Law Director Lucas:** If we were given a public records request on the billings that were sent on various subject matters, we would have to redact a lot of it because it is attorney's privilege. This is why the Finance Director did not include this. There is detailed documentation supporting all the items listed here, which are 42 pages of reading. If Council wants to look at this, I strongly suggest you do so.
- **Mayor Hallum:** These expenses were for 2024. If they had been received in time enough to process them in 2024 we wouldn't even be here. The fact is that we have them now and they need to be paid in 2025. Council would have to approve this to show them against the 2024 budget because he cannot go back and do this on his own. This is because you approved a budget in 2024 and we are now in 2025. These were all expenses that were approved in 2024, but we are now paying them in 2025 to backdate them. For 2024 expenses, you all have to approve it.
- **Finance Director Scott:** Are these for outside legal advice?
- **Mayor Hallum:** They all pertain to our Law Director working for us.
- **Councilwoman Belich:** Do these usually fall into the next year or do these types of issues typically get billed along the way as these issues occur?
- **Law Director Lucas:** We try to get it in before the end of the year and also comply with the time constraints of the Finance Director. The Assistant Law Director had almost 2 years of billing that was sent in November to the Finance Director. Unfortunately, we try to get as much in before the end of the year because then in 2025, we have billing from 2024 still near the end of the year. In December of 2024, there was a lot of litigation going on regarding some of the line items. Virtually all of these line items deal with Special Meetings collected bargaining negotiations, which is outside our retainer and myself and lastly, the litigation itself.
- **Mayor Hallum:** It does not happen all the time but it does from time to time.
- **Council President Kline:** One way to look at this is that there are 5 items, one item is over \$3,000, each of the other ones are less. If all these came through individually (except as a then and now) we wouldn't be seeing these because of their size. Since they all come together all with the same firm, this is the reason why this requires Council's approval.

Discussion of Motion to authorize the Mayor to request bids for the City's Trash and Recycle Program.

- **Mayor Hallum:** Our contract with Republic ends after March. We want to make sure we are doing our due diligence and that we are getting the best deal for our residents at the lowest cost.
- **Council President Kline:** As this contract is set to expire within the next few months, now would be the time for the public to come forward (whether through the Mayor or Council) to express their thoughts on this. Waiting until this comes before Council to be voted on to criticize this is not going to do much good. If you have concerns come forward, let us hear from you about it. We already had some comments made and feedback to consider for a new contract. These things will be considered. If there are other concerns about this, come to us while this is being negotiated and not when we need to vote on it.

Discussion of Motion to nominate a Council member as the Council Representative for the Willoughby Hills Seniors Inc.

- **Council President Kline:** Our current Councilmember is Councilwoman Miller. It is my understanding that she would be receptive to being nominated again. Her nomination would be the subject of this for Thursday's meeting.
- **Mayor Hallum:** Some of you may know there have been some complaints about the clarity of the audio, specifically on cable channels from these meetings. Nick and Karen were working with the people who installed the system for us during COVID-19. Thank you Nick and Karen for your work on that. I got a call from the individuals who did this work and they stated that these are very old and they just don't have the clarity that the newer microphones do. I received an estimate of about \$8,000 to replace all these microphones, including the equipment that has to connect to these to improve that audio. As soon as I have this, I will forward this along to Council so that you all can make that decision as to whether that is something you want to do or not.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** Are the microphones the problem or the whole apparatus?
- **Mayor Hallum:** It is the whole thing including the bases. You cannot attach a newer base; they are not interchangeable. You would have to move to newer microphones completely. They performed sound tests and the problem went away. The audio was clear.
- **Council Clerk Nicholas Aiello:** Karen and I were outside Council Chambers and when they put the new microphones on the dais, the sound was much clearer.
- **Mayor Hallum:** As soon as I have that quote, I will share that so you all can discuss that.
- **Councilwoman Sivo:** Who provided the estimate?
- **Mayor Hallum:** It is the same people who put all the cameras in and did all the work for the system.
- **Councilwoman Sivo:** So it won't go out to bid?
- **Mayor Hallum:** I would not expect that. We were very happy with the work they did. They installed the system and have been very responsive anytime we have had issues. Audio and video equipment is not cheap.

- **Mayor Hallum:** I also wanted to provide a quick update on the multi-use path. The engineers that we have hired to investigate this have been really great. We have had several meetings with them already. They engaged the parks, which is very exciting thinking about the potential of connecting the two parks, as well as all the way points that we are talking about doing now. We still have a long way to go. There are multiple potential grants that we can use to accomplish some of this. Sections of this may not be available for grants, because the area we are talking about would go behind businesses and would not be on public land. These would not apply to that section, but that is a small area comparatively. The path would go down to the parks, and the parks would cover their section (from Mayfield Village up to Strawberry). Then we would continue the multi-purpose path down to the Huntington Bank; go behind those buildings next to the senior apartments, and potentially part of Saint Noel. Saint Noel wanted me to talk to them about potentially using a portion of that so we don't have to tear down trees around the church. Maybe we can use a portion of their lot area that is not used by them that much. This will then continue to Roemisch Field, run behind the Community Center, and continue towards the park at Buttermilk Falls. There may also potentially be an offshoot that will go over to Campbell. This will potentially continue to Manakiki. We would really be making a nice connection for people who want to walk, run, hike, or bike through our City. Until we figure out what will be covered by grants versus what the City would have to fund, we really do not know where that's going to go. We might need to do this in separate parts to accomplish the end goal.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Whatever happened to changing over the emails from Evolve?
- **Mayor Hallum:** This is a work in progress.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Are there any dates for this?
- **Mayor Hallum:** Nothing I can share at the moment.

PUBLIC PORTION: (Audio 35:55)

An opportunity for the public to address Council with any comments, issues, or concerns.

- Public Portion opened at 6:36 p.m.
 - **Lorie Feltham 2605 Timberline Drive:** This is regarding the City trash and recycle program I already mentioned increasing the amount of bags from 10-12. I was also wondering if we could please continue with the yard waste program. In addition, could the company provide yard waste bins with lids? I have been using old containers and cardboard boxes. I figured if this were all labeled correctly people would know right away which is yard waste and what is recyclable.
- Public Portion closed at 6:36 p.m.
- **Mayor Hallum:** While I love the idea of yard waste bins, I do not know that everyone would want one. This is why they don't provide them. However, if you want to purchase something for your own use and mark it as yard waste, you can do that. We will discuss this and see if this is an option in some way. One of the things we are going to be discussing when we put this out to bid is seeing if there are any companies that give us this option. Some of our residents do not want to pay the extra money for bins because they do not want it and will never use it. Republic did not give us this option. One of the things we will be asking is if we

can let residents choose whether they want this or not. In that case, maybe that bin wouldn't be such big deal. We will keep this in mind, but this is what the current mindset is which is why this didn't happen with the current deal.

- **Mayor Hallum:** With regard to the multi-use path, we would also be looking at putting up some exercise stations near the senior apartments that the residents would be able to use. This would be safe for seniors to use and might also enable us to have some programs to learn how to use that equipment. Perhaps there could also be some exercise classes as well.

LEGISLATION: (Audio 39:29)

- No comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT: (Audio 39:40)

- **Motion** made by Councilwoman Belich, seconded by Councilwoman Miller to adjourn the January 6, 2025 Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation.

Roll Call: **AYES:** Sivo, Taylor Draper, Belich, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline, Miller
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Knecht
Vote: 6/0

The meeting was adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

APPROVED: January 23, 2025
Date



Michael Kline
President of Council

ATTEST: Nicholas Aiello
Nicholas Aiello
Clerk of Council