

Council/Mayor Retreat Recap

Saturday, January 22, 2022

8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Present at the Meeting:

Mayor Andy Gardner, Executive Asst. Gloria Majeski, Law Director Mike Lucas, Fire Chief Rob Gandee, Police Chief Matt Naegele, Asst. Law Director Tom Lobe, Road Supt. Mark Grubiss, Finance Director Frank Brichacek, Council President Chris Hallum, Council Vice President Mike Kline, Council Members: Joe Jarmuszkiewicz, Dan Knecht, Tanya Taylor Draper, Julie Belich, Vicki Miller, and Council Clerk Karen Mehollin.

Guest: Joe Sakacs, Mayor, City of Wickliffe

After Council President Hallum and Mayor Gardner welcomed the group, Mayor Gardner presented a Power Point presentation entitled “State of the City.” Some of the highlights of his 30-minute presentation included:

Financial Update – Year-end 2021

- 2021 Ending Balance in General Fund = \$2,480,500.
- Also, purchased Chipper/Jack Hammer for Service Department
- Allocated \$80,000 to purchase/implement Bodycam Program
- Encumbered 2021 funds for 2022 Police Car purchase & purchase of PD radios
- 2022 Draft Budget projects an increase of \$112,100 (conservative budget); if no changes, would take surplus to \$2,600,000
- Highlights of 2021 Financial Management include:
 - (1) Property & Casualty Insurance Policy with Employee Bonds – greater coverage with three-year rate guarantee acquired.
 - (2) Health Insurance rates held to 6% increase in medical, 0% dental, 0% vision and 0% GAP increases.
 - (3) Strongest ever Net Profits tax
 - (4) Mayor’s Court revenue – increased from \$432K to \$518K in 2021.
 - (5) Auditor’s Award received for 2019-2020 financials (including CARES Act funding)
 - (6) Completed spending of \$1,153,100 from CARES Act
 - (7) Rescue Act Total Allocation is \$1,000,687 - \$500,343 received in 2021.
 - (8) Road Fund included replacement of loader (\$175K), resurfacing of Alan, Meadowbrook and Diane Court, Annual rejuvenation work, road striping, engineering and construction deposit for Route 6 East project for 2022; Dodd Road slope failure repair
 - (9) Sewer rehabilitation continued
 - (10) General Obligation Debt retired in 2021 Community Center)

2021 Project/Equipment Highlights:

- Service Department: Truck for Road Superintendent, new loader, new chipper, new hydraulic jackhammer
- City Facility Improvements: Community Center deck repair, new flooring in City Hall, PD, FD, PD Substation remodeling, upgrade PD & Service locker rooms, upgrade PD Patrol and SGT office workstations, CARES Act improvements (Council Chambers & touchless faucets)
- Police & Fire: new ambulance, radios, video systems, security camera system at Police Substation, flock cameras installed in City, Community policing seminars hosted by WHPD, and COVID PODS established for vaccines/boosters
- New Businesses to include Zoom Express Car Wash, Cleveland Animal Rehab, Gaetano's Restaurant and Benjamin Moore Paints
- WHISPER re-instated to help senior citizens
- Holiday “give backs” to include WHFD Toy Drive, WHPD Food and Blanket Collections, Veterans' Day bags from Mayor's Office, Classic/CCF Wellness Run to benefit Velosano and St. Noel Food Pantry

2022 Goals:

- Payroll system upgrade
- Bond issuance for new fire truck & salt storage facility
- PD electronic ticketing from PD car to court
- 2023 Draft Budget to Council by first meeting in December 2022
- Review/evaluation of current contracts/rebidding where feasible
- Safety – Speed sign program, Staff Alice training, 3 Police Cars, fire engine replacement, Chief's car replacement, body camera program, flood notification & planning program, evaluation of photo enforcement program, and others
- Human Resources – FD staffing evaluation, Union negotiations, Hire PT Zoning Inspector, and hire Community Center Property Staff members
- Community Engagement – City website upgrade, LED sign for Community Center, continued growth of City E-newsletter, Block Party program, Development of new Recreation programs, FD 75th Anniversary Celebration, FD Lock boxes for residents and Rock N Roll Day in WH
- Planning – Completion of Master Plan, continued evaluation of referendum zoning, Strategic Plan, Continue 10-year Financial Capital Plan, Economic Development Plan (w/ Council) and emergency planning
- Capital Plan – Continue progress on Road Plan, Salt Storage facility, new snow plow/dump truck, chipper, new Fire Chief car and 3 new PD vehicles

Council then discussed their 2022 Goals, to include:

- Establish ongoing dialog with existing businesses/plan for new businesses to come
- Building/Zoning Administrator
- Cell Towers/Cell service on east end of City
- Printed City newsletter
- Improved website
- District meetings
- Creation of a City Beautification Subcommittee (to enhance City Hall complex area)

Council Vice President Kline explained his interest in ongoing discussion with current businesses (by way of Business Subcommittee) to see what our businesses would find beneficial, i.e. job fair, ongoing meetings tailored by their type of business, focus on “success” stories, etc. He stated that our new website will be able to help with this as well. Council President Hallum suggested that a note be sent to each business, asking for coupons/promotional information to provide with “New Resident Book” that is sent by the Mayor’s Office.

Economic Development was then discussed:

Councilwoman Taylor Draper spoke of her concern that “we need to do better” with our economic development efforts. Assistant Law Director Lobe stated that he has met several times with Scott Scheel and Ray Somich concerning the Shoppes of Willoughby Hills, and he had asked them to rewrite what they felt their Zoning Code concerns were so that he could take that to Council. We have not yet received this information. There was discussion whether a full or part-time position should be established to serve this need. Law Director Lucas suggested meeting with the developer of Pinecrest, as it had been stated that we would like to emulate the concept of live, work and play. Other discussions on this topic included marketing of the City, referendum zoning, the vision, and how to best “sell” our City amenities. Council discussed visiting current businesses one on one to get a better idea of what type of business will work in each area.

Cell Tower – Council discussed the possibility of purchasing the former Garfield School property for a cell site, talking to cell service providers to seek the best locations, consider the generation of revenue, but be mindful of safety requirements (as identified by the Grange/River Road location previously). Further meetings will be set up in the future to discuss this topic.

Fund Raiser/City Fellowship/Miscellaneous – Councilwoman Taylor Draper suggested a City softball game or other activity to bring people together, even other cities to challenge. Councilwoman Miller suggested improvement of our Senior programs. Council President Hallum suggested that he would like to continue with the District meetings, three times a year, to invite more community input. The concept of a Business Task Force as opposed to a PT Economic

Development Director has discussed. Council will continue to work with current businesses to address their needs and listen to their thoughts. A Volunteer Database was discussed to allow volunteers to sign up for activities via the website, being able to select the event, job, and times to work. We can add the “City Beautification” tasks to these and perhaps individuals who like to garden or plant will come forward to assist.

Capital Plan – Mayor Gardner presented Council with a 10-year Capital Financial Plan which was prepared with collaboration of Finance Director Brichacek and Department Heads. This addresses the future purchase of vehicles, equipment, repairs, etc. It is rather extensive but will be provided on the City website for public viewing.

Referendum Zoning - During the lunch break, Wickliffe Mayor Joe Sakacs was our guest and spoke of “referendum zoning,” which was passed by the Wickliffe voters in the November 2021 election. This gave the City an opportunity to move forward with economic development when previously court action was required. Assistant Law Director Lobe offered Council and Mayor information on this topic, citing that some of the Wickliffe procedure could be followed if referendum zoning would be put to our electors, but other aspects would have to be handled differently. This is a topic that will be researched and be the topic of future meetings.

The final few topics included Community Engagement, Collaborations and Council Operations. Community Engagement consisted of ideas such as website update to eliminate Google searches that brings up old information, food truck day at Shoppes of WH to encourage apartment dwellers to mingle, “Taste of WH” or Ribfest, volunteer appreciation, Board/Commission get-togethers, pathways to parks, church collaboration, business giveaways at events, PD/FD Safety meeting for residents once or twice a year.

Council Operations brought forth dialog concerning the current procedure of Working Committee of Council covering the duties of many other previous Committees, held the Monday before the Thursday Regular Council meetings. All were in agreement to keep this schedule intact.

The meeting concluded at approximately 3:00 p.m.