

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS
DECEMBER 1, 2008

Mayor Rothschild called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Roll Call: Present: Mrs. Adele H. Zucker
Ms. Frankie B. Goldberg
Mr. Steven D. Bullock
Mr. Kevin Patrick Murphy
Mr. Frank Consolo
Mr. Steven Sims

Absent: Mr. Peter R. Bernardo

Also Present: Clerk of Council Nancy E. English
Law Director Kenneth J. Fisher
Finance Director Arman R. Ochoa
Chief of Police Gary Stehlik
Fire Chief John Pitchler
Community Coordinator Walter Stinson
Building Commissioner David Menn
Service Director Christopher Vild
City Engineer Joseph R. Ciuni

MOTION BY MS. GOLDBERG, SECONDED BY MR. SIMS to excuse the absence of Mr. Bernardo. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

Minutes of the regular meeting held on November 17, 2008

There were no corrections or additions to the minutes of November 17, 2008.

MOTION BY MR. SIMS, SECONDED BY MR. BULLOCK to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2008 meeting. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

Comments from the Audience:

Kate Uhlir, 2448 Fenwick Road, stated that since the Charter Review Commission (CRC) is looking at a structural change in the government, there should be more extensive notification of the CRC meetings. She also suggested that a town hall meeting be held to discuss the pros and cons of a change in the form of city government. Mrs. Uhlir also suggested that a city-wide mailing go out about the town hall meeting and that the Plain Dealer and Sun Press reporters be invited to the meetings.

Susan Infeld, 3906 Tyndall Road, echoed the sentiments of Mrs. Uhlir about maintaining open communications with the residents. She also commented on Ordinance No. 2008-69, authorizing a contract with the Northeast Ohio Sourcing Office (NEO/SO) for an exception analysis study for the City. Mrs. Infeld noted that she researched efficiency studies for municipal governments and found out there are various strategies to achieve efficiencies and cost savings. One is a functional analysis, which is a process of identifying the functions performed by a city, in a systematic way, based on a standard set of criteria, such as best practices or common practices. Another would be an efficiency review, which is an evaluation of how cost effective the operation of the city is; this would help identify ways to improve cost effectiveness of the essential services provided. A third strategy would be a fee study, in which municipalities might use fees for services as a way to hold off increases on property taxes. Another is considering shared services with other governmental entities, which the City has done and continues to do. The exception analysis which NEO/SO is proposing would look at the functions performed by employees which the employees think adds value to the city services as well as those functions the employees think do not add value to city services. Then NEO/SO will come up with a list of priority activities which the City should continue to perform and the rationale for those decisions. Mrs. Infeld stated that the process looks like part of an outsourcing opportunity for NEO/SO and it would be an assessment rather than a complete study. She was concerned about not having opinions and interviews done with all stakeholders in the City, i.e. the Council, residents, John Carroll University and businesses. She was also concerned that the formal analysis of best practices is not mentioned in the proposal. Also not mentioned was a comparison of University Heights to other municipalities of similar size. Mrs. Infeld stated that her hope is that residents will be interviewed in an effort to have a more open process which will result in a better product.

Steve Bennett, 3761 Hillbrook Road, invited Council members to the Northeast Ohio City Council Association (NOCCA) Winter Forum on Thursday, December 4, 2008 at Parma City Hall Council Chambers, 6611 Ridge Road. The topic of the forum is "Now Is The Time: Advance Northeast Ohio" which addresses the region's economic action plan. There are four (4) key priorities under the plan: 1) Business Growth & Attraction; 2) Talent Development; 3) Racial & Economic Inclusion; and 4) Government Collaboration & Efficiency. Guest speakers include: Dave Abbott, CEO Gund Foundation, Laura Steinbrink and Brad Whitehead, both of Advance Northeast Ohio.

Reports and Communications from the Mayor and the taking of action:

Mayor Rothschild reported that the City received a plaque from the National League of Cities (NLC) for 25 years of membership. University Heights has been a member of the NLC since June 1, 1983.

Agenda Items:

A. Ordinance No. 2008-66 Authorizing Year-end transfers

Ordinance No. 2008-66 authorizes the transfer of funds as follows: five (5) transfers from the General Fund to the Police Pension Fund in the amount of \$374,966.00, to the Fire Pension Fund in the amount of \$477,160.00, to the FEMA Fund in the amount of \$2,500.00, to the Street Lighting Fund in the amount of \$20,000, and to the Tree Maintenance Fund in the amount of \$13,000.00; a transfer from the Street Maintenance Fund to the Bond Retirement Fund in the amount of \$1,500,000; a transfer from the Sewer Maintenance "A" Fund to the Bond Retirement Fund in the amount of \$500,000.00; and a transfer from the Capital Improvement Fund to the Bond Retirement Fund in the amount of \$548,000.00.

MOTION BY MR. SIMS, SECONDED BY MRS. ZUCKER to approve the passage of Ordinance No. 2008-66 as an emergency measure. On roll call, on suspension of rules, all voted "aye." On roll call, on passage, all voted "aye."

B. Ordinance No. 2008-67 Authorizing temporary appropriations for 2009

Ordinance No. 2008-67 authorizes temporary appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the City of University Heights for the period of January 1, 2009 through March 31, 2009 as required by Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Section 5705.36.

MOTION BY MR. SIMS, SECONDED BY MR. BULLOCK to approve the passage of Ordinance No. 2008-67 as an emergency measure. On roll call, on suspension of rules all voted "aye." On roll call, on passage, all voted "aye."

C. Resolution 2008-68 Authorizing tax advances for 2009

Resolution No. 2008-68 requests the County Auditor to advance taxes from the proceeds of tax levies for the period of January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009 pursuant to ORC Section 321.34. Councilman Sims reported that agenda items A, B, C, and D were all discussed at the Finance Committee meeting of November 18, 2008 and were recommended for passage. He noted that members of the Financial Advisory Committee were also in attendance at the committee meeting.

MOTION BY MR. SIMS, SECONDED BY MR. BULLOCK to approve the passage of Ordinance No. 2008-68 as an emergency measure. On roll call, on suspension of rules, all voted "aye." On roll call, on passage, all voted "aye."

D. Resolution 2008-69 Authorizing a contract with NEO|SO to conduct an Exception Analysis Study

Resolution No. 2008-69 authorizes a contract with the Northeast Ohio Sourcing Office (NEO/SO) for an Exception Analysis Study of the City of University Heights.

Resolution No. 2008-69 was placed on first reading. There were no objections.

E. Ordinance No. 2008-70 Re-Appointing Arman R. Ochoa as Director of Finance on a part-time basis

Mayor Rothschild stated that Finance Director Arman Ochoa is leaving the full-time employment of the City for another position. However, he has agreed to stay on with the City on a part-time basis until the end of Mayor Rothschild's term.

Ordinance No. 2008-70 authorizes the re-appointment of Arman R. Ochoa as Director of Finance on a part-time basis and establishes the compensation of Director of Finance (part-time) at an amount not to exceed \$50,000 annually with no fringe benefits commencing December 15, 2008 until December 31, 2009. The City will save approximately \$55,493 for the term of the appointment due to a reduction in the base salary, elimination of medical coverage, elimination of employer pension contribution to Ohio Public Employees Retirement System, and other fringe benefits such as vacation leave, sick leave and paid holidays.

Councilman Sims reported that the proposal was studied by all members of Council. Mr. Sims noted that his consolation in moving toward a part-time finance director is based solely on the fact that Mr. Ochoa has done a good job for the City and because of his familiarity with the City. He added that the arrangement will give the City the opportunity to continue to accomplish its work relative to the finances of the City and allow time to identify a permanent replacement.

MOTION BY MR. SIMS, SECONDED BY MRS. ZUCKER to approve the passage of Ordinance No. 2008-70 as an emergency measure. On roll call, on suspension of rules, all voted "aye." On roll call, on passage, all voted "aye."

F. Motion to approve a budget in the amount of \$5,000 for the Charter Review Commission

At its meeting on November 25, 2008 the Charter Review Commission passed a motion requesting Council to appropriate a budget of \$5,000 for the Charter Review Commission for secretarial staff, legal counsel and miscellaneous expenses.

MOTION BY MR. SIMS, SECONDED MR. BULLOCK to appropriate a budget of \$5,000 for the Charter Review Commission. On roll call, all voted "aye."

G. Motion to accept bids for the sale of used vehicles

Informal bids were opened on November 28, 2008 for the sale of five (5) used vehicles. Six individuals/companies bid on various vehicles. The high bid on each vehicle is as follows: Truck #1, plow with salt spreader - high bid was received from Ben Fisco in the amount of \$551.00; Vehicle #1, 1996 Ford Explorer, high bid was received from Ben Fisco in the amount of \$121.00; Vehicle #2, 2003 Ford Crown Victoria, high bid was received from Asia Motors, Inc. in the amount of \$1,735.00; Vehicle #3, 2003 Ford Crown Victoria, high bid was received from Action Motors, Inc. in the amount of \$1,677.99; Vehicle #4, 2001 Ford Crown Victoria, high bid was received from Action Motors, Inc. in the amount of \$1,677.99. Mr. Sims suggested that in the future the information for the sale of used vehicles be included on the City's website and that other ways of notification be considered in order to obtain a larger group of proposed bidders.

MOTION MRS. ZUCKER, SECONDED BY MR. BULLOCK to accept the bids for the sale of used vehicles as presented. On roll call, all voted "aye."

H. Motion to hold an executive session immediately following this regular meeting for the purpose of discussing personnel, litigation and real estate matters

An executive session was not required.

Directors' Reports:

Service Director Christopher Vild reported that the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) may have salt available for \$75 per ton plus delivery charges. The City has been placed on the list to purchase salt from ODOT, but a formal commitment has not been made. Mr. Vild will update Council on this situation at its next meeting.

Building Commissioner David Menn reported that the purchase of the Franklin computer system is complete and the system is operational.

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee Chairman Steven Sims reported that the committee met on November 18, 2008 and considered items which were on the Council agenda at this meeting. Also at the committee meeting, the Finance Director gave a projected outlook of finances over the next three (3) years for the General Fund operating expenses which is balanced, but does not include requests for capital expenditure items. The capital requests will be prioritized. Mr. Sims noted that the budget will continue to be reviewed in order to maintain a balanced operation for the City.

Recreation Committee Chairman Frankie Goldberg reported that the Recreation Committee met on November 19, 2008 and will meet again on Wednesday, December 3, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Ms. Goldberg inquired as to the status of the University Parkway project. City Engineer Joseph R. Ciuni responded that the contractor will return to repair the two (2) areas where a vehicle drove through the uncured concrete. But, other than that, the project is complete. Mr. Ciuni noted that the Service Department will repair the holes in the roadway once the contractor has left the site.

With regard to the Silsby Road project, Service Director Christopher Vild reported that all the temporary lines, plates, and equipment have been removed. The street was cleaned and will be reopened to traffic.

Ms. Goldberg thanked Mr. Ochoa and his family for continuing with the City for the next year.

Safety Committee Chairman Steven D. Bullock reported that the Safety Committee will meet jointly with the Finance Committee on Monday, December 8, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers to hear a comprehensive report from Fire Chief Pitchler. He invited all officials to attend.

Service & Utilities Committee Chairman Adele H. Zucker reported that the committee met on November 24, 2008 and recommended adopting the "Sensible Salting Policy." Under the policy the Service Department will discontinue salting residential side streets. Salt will only be applied to main streets, intersection and hills. However, all streets will continue to be plowed of excess snow. The committee also discussed a refuse proposal and other studies which are still under consider.

Vice Mayor Zucker announced that the Stormwater Management Committee will meeting on Tuesday, December 2, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the conference room at City Hall.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Beryl E. Rothschild

Nancy E. English, Clerk of Council