

**COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, OHIO
MONDAY, MAY 1, 2023**

Vice Mayor Michele Weiss called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present: Mrs. Michele Weiss
Mrs. Barbara Blankfeld
Mr. Brian King
Mrs. Sheri Sax

Absent: Mr. Christopher Cooney
Mr. John Rach

Also Present: Law Director Luke McConville
Clerk of Council Kelly Thomas
Finance Director Dennis Kennedy
Police Chief Dustin Rogers
Fire Chief Robert Perko
City Engineer Joseph Ciuni
Economic Development Susan Drucker
Housing and Community Development Geoff Englebrecht

MOTION BY MRS. BLANKFELD, SECONDED BY MR. KING to Approve the Absence of Councilpersons John Rach and Christopher Cooney. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

Approval of Council Minutes:

City Council minutes from April 17, 2023 were not completed for review and approval.

Additions and Removals from the Agenda; Referrals to Committee

None

Comments from Audience

Mr. Micah Maliskas, 2592 University Blvd. was present to voice his support of Council passing Resolution 2023-20 proclaiming May 2023 Bike Month in University Heights because a lot of good that could be done in the community by encouraging bike use and redeveloping the roads to the sidewalks for greater walkability. Mr. Maliskas said that he hoped that it was not an empty Resolutions, but would actually be action taking to improve the community.

Ms. Susan Restifo, 3742 Silsby was concerned about the speeding vehicles and accidents at the corner of Silsby and Edgerton. Ms. Restifo asked if a blink speed limit sign or other low-cost preventative measure could be taken to slow the cars down.

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

Mayor’s Report

Mayor Brennan was absent and there was no Mayor’s report in his absence.

Report and Communications from City Council, and the taking of action thereon

Mrs. Weiss stated that she was very excited to tell everybody that the meeting was being live streamed on YouTube and that hopefully that would be a regular occurrence going forward. After a long process, the city’s IT Committee approved an IT vendor and there will be a short presentation by one committee’s chairpersons this evening. Mrs. Weiss thanked everyone who was involved in that long three-year process and noted that it had a positive outcome. Sadly Mrs. Weiss announced that there had been two unfortunate deaths in the city community. This week, Neal Gould, who was very active in many committees over the last 10 to 15 years passed away after an illness. His wife, Jackie, is on the Charter

Review Committee. City Council sends their thoughts and prayers to the Gould family. And then secondly, condolences are for Councilman John Rach and the loss of his mother. Unfortunately, the city has lost many family members over the last few months, Mrs. Weiss wish is that everyone only celebrates good news going forward.

Reports and Communications from the Directors, and the taking of action thereon

Finance Department – Mr. Kennedy

Mr. Kennedy reported that the department is in the process of closing out April and that the auditors are finishing up the city's audit.

Economic Development – Mrs. Drucker

Mrs. Drucker stated that she would give her report during Executive Session.

There were no other department reports.

Reading and Disposition of Ordinances, Resolutions, Motions and Consideration of Agenda Items:

A. Presentation from the City's Technology Committee regarding Recommendation of Starfish for the City's IT Support Services

Mr. Jian Quan, Co-Chair Technology Advisory Committee reported that after 3 years the Technology Advisory Committee publicly advertised and accepted bids for the City's long-term IT Support needs. Bids were received from Bay Pointe Technology and Starfish Computer Corp. The bids were quite different from the two vendors. The Starfish bid was much more complete than Bay Pointe bid and the Bay Pointe services were more a la carte which explains their lower base cost. With the Starfish bid proposal the city knows what they are getting and the cost associated with those services. The committee reached out to both vendors and invited them in to publicly explain their proposals. In summation Mr. Quan stated that based on the in-person meetings with both vendors and with the Mayor's recommendation the Committee recommends that the City accepts the bid from Starfish.

Mr. King thanked Mr. Quian for presenting to Council and helping co-chair the committee. Mr. King also thanked the other committee members, including co-chair Mrs. Hudak, Mr. Burke, Mr. Geyman, Ms. Levin from the CH-UH Library District, the Council Outreach Committee members, Mrs. Sax and Vice Mayor Weiss. The whole team put in a lot of work over this time period. Mr. King added that he was really excited about the product that been delivered and that Council would be voting on. This will be putting the city in a much better place with its IT systems. Also, by moving to a cloud-based platform it will make it our systems to be much more resilient and it will also help set the city up for hopefully moving into new facilities down the line, because everything will be just pick it up from the cloud.

B. Motion to Authorizing Mayor to enter into Agreement with Starfish for IT Support Services

Mrs. Blankfeld thanked the committee including those that were there at the very beginning during the pandemic when the first meetings were held virtually. It has been a long road with much due diligence. Everyone is so grateful.

Mrs. Sax recognize Councilman King and before him Mrs. Pardee and the whole committee. Not only is there now confidence in moving to the cloud and just improving the whole system, but that there is now an established RFP process that works and works well.

There was no additional discussion of this item.

MOTION BY MR. KING, SECONDED BY MRS. BLANKFELD to Authorizing Mayor to enter into Agreement with Starfish for IT Support Services. On Roll call, all voted "aye."

C. Ordinance 2023-19 Establishing that the Annual Rate of Pay for Members of Council Shall not be Less than the Minimum Amount Necessary to Qualify for Eligibility for Ohio Public Employee Retirement System Years of Service, and Declaring an Emergency

Mr. McConville stated that Council had passed an Ordinance establishing Council’s rates of pay and in that Ordinance, Council clarified that going forward, Council’s pay rates shall remain the same as they are currently as they have been for a number of years. However, the Finance Director flagged an issue which is that over time, OPERS, the Ohio Public Employee Retirement System will from time to time raise the minimum level of pay required for a public employee to be able to accrue a full year of service for a year served and that the council pay as it is currently established and because it is fairly low and because it has remained static could eventually be bypassed by that minimum level of pay to a point where council members who are serving a full year would not get a full year of credit in the OPERS system. Accordingly, introduced Ordinance 2023-19, which would be self-executing would automatically raise the level of pay of council people to that level of pay, which is the minimum amount necessary under OPERS rules to accrue one year of service for a year served. In addition, clarified in the ordinance is that this self-execution shall not operate to give any member of council an interim pay raise. So, any member joining Council after the passage of this ordinance would enjoy the self-execution and then any current member reelected to a subsequent term or new member would enjoy that self-executing pay raise.

Mrs. Weiss added that this was referred by the Finance Committee.

Mr. King noted that he liked this mechanism because it helps provide something that is tied nominally to inflation by the increase of rate of pay.

Ordinance 2023-19 was placed on first reading.

D. Appointment of New Council-appointed Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) Board Member

Mrs. Weiss reported that Mr. Gould was on the CIC so there is now an empty Council spot on that Corporation right now and it is Council’s duty to appoint another member. Mr. Rach did give interest as well as another council member. Mrs. Weiss stated that she did speak to that member and she believed that they agreed to forego and let Mr. Rach have that place.

MOTION BY MRS. WEISS, SECONDED BY MRS. BLANKFELD to Appoint Mr. Rach as the of new Appointed Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) Board Member. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

E. Resolution 2023-20 Proclaiming May 2023 Bike Month in the City of University Heights

Mr. King read Resolution 2023-20 in to the record.

A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING MAY 2023 BIKE MONTH IN THE CITY OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

WHEREAS, bicycling is a sociable, healthy, green and economical mode of travel; and

WHEREAS, since 2010, the United States Department of Transportation has adopted a policy stating that “walking and bicycling are considered as equals with other transportation modes” and “not an afterthought in roadway design;” and

WHEREAS, The State of Ohio recognizes bicycles as valid vehicles for use on all University Heights roads; and

WHEREAS, University Heights streets and buildings are ideally arranged in a compact, well-connected pattern making it easy to walk and bike to businesses, schools, and recreational and cultural facilities; and

WHEREAS, University Heights continues to assess its transportation network and connections to other cities, finding grants for projects that improve the safety and comfort of bicyclists, such as the recently completed bike lanes on Warrensville Center Road; and

WHEREAS, University Heights in collaboration with the cities of Cleveland Heights and South Euclid have been awarded grant funding from the Northeast Ohio Regional Coordinating Agency (NOACA) to create a network of Neighborhood Greenways that will interconnect our cities with safe cycling routes; and

WHEREAS, educating cyclists on the proper and safe operation of bicycles and motorists on how to properly share roads with bicyclists (including our school children) is important to ensure the safety and well-being of all; and

WHEREAS, the League of American Bicyclists, Bike Cleveland, the Heights Bicycle Coalition, and transportation and fitness bicyclists in University Heights and other cities are promoting greater public awareness of cycling during the month of May through events such as *Bike to Work Week* on May 15-21, *Bike to Work Day* on Friday, May 19, 2023, and *Bike to School Day* on May 3, 2023, which brings attention to the importance of creating safe routes to schools; and

WHEREAS, the annual *Ride of Silence* will take place in Greater Cleveland on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, in which University Heights will participate with hundreds of other cities internationally to honor those killed or injured while riding on public streets, and can be observed by joining participants who will ride from John Carroll University in University Heights to University Hospital where they will join other Cleveland area riders for a memorial presentation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, OHIO, THAT:

SECTION 1. The Mayor and City Council do hereby proclaim May 2023 to be Bike Month in the City of University Heights. This City encourages all residents to review the laws and regulations governing bicycle safety, and to use a bicycle for transportation, especially for trips within the City of University Heights.

SECTION 2. Notice of passage of this Resolution shall be given by publishing the title and abstract of its contents, prepared by the Law Director, once in one newspaper of general circulation in the City of University Heights, and on the city's social media.

Mr. King thanked Mr. Englebrecht for bringing together the cities of Cleveland Heights and South Euclid to get grant funding from the NOACA and the it will be exciting to see the connections between our cities to make them more cyclable and bringing better routes. Also Mr. King side that he would again be leading the Road of Silence Ride that commemorates the lives of those who lost their lives to traffic violence over the past year. Thankfully, there have been no people in the Heights area the last year, but the two previous years, at least one person was killed.

MOTION BY MR. KING, SECONDED BY MRS. WEISS Approving Resolution 2023-20 Proclaiming May 2023 Bike Month in The City of University Heights. On roll call, all voted "aye."

F. Approval of Purchase of Cloud Server Service from Software Solutions in an amount not to exceed \$19,110.00

Mr. Kennedy reported that the current server is on a shared server, so when problems happen with other programming on there, it could cause disruption to Finance Department's services. This service will all be managed in a cloud environment by the current software vendor and will allow the department to do different things and get the updates automatically, as opposed to having to shut the system down or reload over the weekend. This will be a win-win for everybody, especially combined with the IT Project that was awarded.

Mrs. Weiss clarified that this would be a one-time charge for integration of the \$18,000 and that there would be a saving of the from the current subscription cost of \$25,000 our annual subscription per year.

Mr. Kennedy replied that the renewal for the cloud is \$18,000 and that there would be a new negotiated price for the \$25,000 software support that Mrs. Weiss was referring to.

MOTION BY MRS. SAX, SECONDED BY MR. KING to Approval of Purchase of Cloud Server Service from Software Solutions in an amount not to exceed \$19,110.00. On roll call, all voted "aye."

G. Motion to Authorize the Mayor to Execute the “Spalding Leasing Office Lease Extension” for the Period of One Year from June 1, 2023 through May 31, 2024 for the lease of Suite 105 at 2245 Warrensville Center Road, University Heights, Ohio.

Mrs. Drucker stated that this is the annex office space that houses the Economic Development and HR Departments, as well space for other department heads to hold meetings in the conference rooms.

MOTION BY MRS. SAX, SECONDED BY MRS. WEISS Authorizing the Mayor to Execute the “Spalding Leasing Office Lease Extension” for the Period of One Year from June 1, 2023 through May 31, 2024 for the lease of Suite 105 at 2245 Warrensville Center Road, University Heights, Ohio with the cost of \$1,638.00 per month. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

H. Motion to Approve and Enter into a Contract for the 2023 Pavement Marking Bid with Pat Flowers Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$56,131.15

Mr. Ciuni reported that as presented in the Safety Committee meeting bids were opened on April 14 2023 for the annual street marking program. Last year the city went in with Shaker Heights on a joint bid and it was a three-year contract with JD Striping. At the time Mr. Ciuni felt that prices were high, but that there was not much of a choice at that time because everything was just coming out of the pandemic and everything was inflated at that point. Mr. Ciuni said that back in February of 2022 he recommended that the city award the one year of the three-year bid and then evaluated at the end of the year. Because of the issues with the quantities and the amount of the striping lines that were in the contract versus what the reality was over the summer, I was instructed to remeasured all the stop bars, crosswalk bars, bike symbols, white lines, edge lines, yellow lines, etc. and put together a new package because since the quantities were different the city could not join with Shaker Heights for years 2 and 3. Bids were received from JD Striping & Services and from Pat Flowers Inc. Pat Flowers came in with the lower bid and although they have not worked for the City University Heights in the past, they have had the program featured in Highland Heights, Mayfield Village and Lyndhurst, mostly around the east side of Cleveland. Pat Flowers is a reputable company and Mr. Ciuni recommend the approval of the contract for \$56,131.15.

Mrs. Weiss added that this was presented at the Safety Committee meeting. Noting that it was a lot of work Mrs. Weiss thanked Mr. Ciuni for remeasure everything but now there is actually a good starting point going forward and there is a saving of about \$30,000 from last year.

MOTION BY MRS. WEISS, SECONDED BY MR. KING to Approve and Enter into a Contract for the 2023 Pavement Marking Bid with Pat Flowers Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$56,131.15. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

I. Motion to Enter Executive Session for the purpose of Discussing Legal Proceedings, Personnel and Real Estate Matters

Mrs. Weiss stated that an executive session was needed to discuss Real Estate Matters.

MOTION BY MRS. BLANKFELD, SECONDED BY MRS. SAX to enter into Executive Session for the discussion of Real Estate Matters. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

Standing Council Committees:

Building Committee – Mrs. Blankfeld

Mrs. Blankfeld stated that there would be a committee meeting on May 15 at 5:30pm with the same agenda items as the ones from the previous meeting in addition to the item from Mr. McConville and Mr. Englebrecht.

Safety Committee – Mrs. Weiss

Just prior to the Council meeting the Safety Committee met. There was discussion about the striping, the pavement marking bid which was on this agenda. The committee also discussed LPRs (License Plate Readers) and the city is in the running for grant for two of them. Chief Rogers will be updating the safety committee in the future with the approximate cost of how much it would cost to have these readers on

every light fixture. The committee also got updates on previous discussions regarding Hadleigh/Fenwood traffic. There was discussion about potential ordinance changes for fire prevention. This will be coming out in conjunction with building ordinances going forward. And the final discussion item was regarding a regional grant initiative for mental health professionals to be part of the Fire and Police departments. Shaker Heights has piloted this program successfully but it is a very competitive grant.

Service and Utilities – Mrs. Sax

Mrs. Sax stated that due to the lack of a quorum, she had to cancel the scheduled April 27 meeting and that she was in the process of putting together another doodle pol

Council Committee of the Whole – Mrs. Weiss

The Committee of the Whole is in the process of appointing a new council member. The first meeting will be on this Wednesday, and that will be concluded by May 15.

There were no other Council Committee reports.

Reports of special committees, and the taking of action thereon

None

Unfinished and miscellaneous business

None

MOTION BY MRS. BLANKFELD, SECONDED BY MR. KING to return to regular Council Session. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

MOTION BY MRS. BLANKFELD, SECONDED BY MRS. WEISS to adjourn the meeting. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:19pm

Michele Weiss, Vice Mayor

Kelly M. Thomas, Clerk of Council