

**DRAFT**

**CITY OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, OHIO**

**Minutes of Service and Utilities Committee  
Wiley Middle School - 2181 Miramar Boulevard  
October 10, 2023**

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Councilwoman Sheri Sax, Chair of the Service and Utilities Committee, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Councilwoman Sheri Sax, Chair  
Councilman Christopher Cooney (via Zoom)  
Councilwoman Threse Marshall  
Councilman John Rach, Alternate

Also present: Vice Mayor Michele Weiss  
Councilwoman Win Weizer  
Finance Director Dennis Kennedy  
Service Director Allen Pennington  
Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan

Mrs. Sax welcomed Mr. Allen Pennington and thanked him for attending tonight's meeting, the first one for him. She also thanked Mr. Pennington for meeting with her on August 17 where they discussed service-related issues that residents have brought to the attention of her as well as other members of Council. The purpose of this meeting is to work together to address those concerns. It was noted that some items straddle other departments.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**1. Signs**

It was noted that the management of the city's signs had been the responsibility of the police department, but is now in the process of transitioning to the service department. Mrs. Sax asked Mr. Pennington about the process and timeframe regarding same. Mr. Pennington stated that efforts are being made to completely transition, hopefully, by the end of the year and referred to budgeting for the project. He mentioned that he has been working with Lt. Brian Lombardo in the police department on the project and that by November the official transition could take place. Mrs. Sax acknowledged that signs discussion should be shared with Lt. Lombardo to determine what can be accomplished this year, and priorities for next year can be established.

Missing and damaged signs were discussed, i.e., Canterbury, Charney, etc. Mrs. Sax suggested that the service department scour the city to assess which additional signs need repaired and/or replaced.

Mrs. Weiss noted that there are many signs that need attention. She suggested that since the rubbish collectors are throughout the city, they can cite the missing/damaged signs. Mr. Pennington noted that the leaf pickup season is approaching, followed by the snow removal season and that he is in the process of adjusting for same. He noted that he will examine the city himself; it will take him a month or so to work with the police department to determine inventory. It was noted that 60 days could be a benchmark and the matter can be revisited before the end of the year. Mr. Pennington agreed.

In response to a question by Councilwoman Weizer, Mr. Pennington mentioned that the signs project is one of the special duties that Mr. Brian Lombardo handles, and he will remain with the police department. Mr. Pennington noted that going forward with budgeting, assessments will be made regarding whether there will be additional assistance assigned part-time on signage/part-time on street repairs or whatever the case may be in the service department. The possibility of increasing the budget for one person that will be handling those other things was mentioned.

Finance Director Dennis Kennedy advised that the traffic control budget for this year is \$246,080, and about \$60,000 of that is dedicated to payroll, pension, and salary costs. There is about \$186,000 for all the other supplies and equipment, including contracts with Signal Service. Mr. Kennedy pointed out that the road striping contract is included; Signal Service has been allocated \$54,000 for the service part of the contract, and \$60,000 for traffic control equipment maintenance.

In response to Vice Mayor Weiss' question, Mr. Kennedy noted that Lieutenant Lombardo is not charged to the budget discussed, but is charged entirely to the police department.

Mr. Cooney asked Mr. Kennedy about a line item in the budget for traffic signs; he asked if street signs fall under that line item or a different line item. Mr. Kennedy believes that under traffic signs, that is included in the traffic control budget. It was clarified that what was being referred to is an \$8,000 line item from this year. Mr. Kennedy reported that year-to-date \$600 has been spent.

Mrs. Sax recapped that over the next 30-60 days, assessments will be made whether to repair or replace signs, that a cost will be provided, and perhaps a plan to implement same based on the money in the budget.

It was noted that there have been many complaints from residents who reside on streets bordering John Carroll University regarding parked cars blocking driveways and other areas where there should be no parking. Mrs. Sax mentioned that she has forwarded numerous complaints to Police Chief Rogers regarding these complaints. It was also reported that JCU had discussed shuttle service for parking off-site, but the problems persist. Mrs. Sax suggested that temporary signage be discussed regarding temporary parking limits on the streets affected; JCU continues construction.

Councilwoman Threse Marshall, chair of the Safety Committee, stated that there have been discussions with Police Chief Rogers and updates on the JCU parking concerns are forthcoming

## **2. Leaf Collection**

Councilman John Rach expressed concern about leaf collection on Belvoir, noting that every tree lawn has a parked car. Mrs. Sax noted that leaf collection efficiency has been problematic, some caused by blocked tree lawns. She asked if there is a plan to place signs out alerting residents of leaf collection; coordination with the police and service departments is needed. Mr. Pennington provided the following schedule.

Leaf collection will begin on Monday, October 16 and the last pickup will be December 22.

Temporary staff members will be acquired and utilized over a period of eight weeks; the season gets a heavier drop around October 30 and goes through the end of December.

Regarding signage, there are some signs that indicate leaf pickup and temporary parking restrictions. Mr. Pennington believes the time frame lists 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. There are about 40 signs available.

Mr. Pennington stated that a lot depends on staffing levels and the pace of the leaf fall.

Reference was made to complaints last year about a collection of leaves at Purvis Park. Mr. Pennington reported that the plan this year is to haul leaves out on a daily basis as much as possible. One of the mechanics will have a load of leaves at the end of the day on his way home to unload at a Newbury facility. It was noted that Kimble was going to charge more for this service, but Mr. Pennington arranged to get another company to turn the leaves into mulch and will be charging the city \$2,800 for the one-year season, much lower than what Kimble proposed.

With reference to overtime work on Saturdays for the service workers during the leaf gathering season, Mr. Pennington stated that it is hoped to have space available in the service yard to store leaves until hauling away on rotation schedule.

## **3. Parks**

Mrs. Sax referred to Walter Stinson Park and thanked the service department for maintaining the bathrooms there and noted that things are fairly good there. She asked about winterizing the bathrooms and asked what that would entail, and if it is included in this year's budget. Mr. Kennedy believes that there is an energize community grant from NOPEC available to do that. Mayor Brennan stated that Joe Ciuni is working on the design for same, but construction will not

be completed before winter. Mayor Brennan stated that there is more to the process than installing heaters. There was further discussion regarding the project and it was revealed that some additional monies had not been received for the project; and that it was believed to have been included in the budget as well as the fact that Mr. Ciuni has been assigned the project. Ms. Weizer mentioned that this now seems to be delayed from the Mayor's prior statements. It was agreed that Councilwoman Weizer will provide prior minutes relating to this to both Mayor Brennan and Councilwoman Sax. Mrs. Sax will email Mr. Ciuni for an update

Mr. Pennington described some of the routine ongoing maintenance work that will be done to winterize bathrooms.

Purvis Park was discussed. Mrs. Sax noted that some of the discussion will concern the service department, but also could include recreation. Mr. Cooney stated that he made a note for the next Recreation Committee to discuss bathroom facilities.

Mrs. Sax reported that residents on Belvoir have complained about over-growth and trash on the back of their property. Mrs. Sax thanked Mr. Pennington for having the growth mowed. She reported, however, that she revisited the area and there was more trash strewn about. Mr. Pennington stated that trucks park in the area and the trash could possibly be a result of that. Mrs. Sax reported that someone actually witnessed a trucker place trash into a bin. Discussion regarding the placement of a trash bins to possibly alleviate the debris continued. Mr. Pennington noted that there are nine (9) cans on the site, and that the service staff does routinely clean up the area and monitoring of the area will continue.

#### **4. Potholes and Barriers**

Mrs. Sax referred to the "Street and Catch Basin Repair List" prepared by Mr. Pennington and thanked him for same. Discussion ensued regarding missing or damaged sewer grades, potholes and orange barrels and concerns of residents; Mrs. Sax was told that this was not a priority. Mr. Pennington noted that completion of all of the repairs is desired, but there has been a staffing issue. He noted that because of the leaf season, some of the repairs are going to be limited. Mr. Pennington reported that work on Washington has been completed; work on Meadowbrook and Channing is going to be addressed. With reference to the remaining work to be done, Mr. Pennington stated that discussions with Finance Director Kennedy and Mayor Brennan need to take place to determine whether overtime should be utilized to complete some of the projects before the end of the season. He noted that not everything listed will be completed this fall, and will likely be carried over until spring.

Ms. Weizer discussed the possibility of having some of the work outsourced to alleviate some of the work falling on the service department. The matter if overtime versus outsourcing was discussed as well as union concerns. Mrs. Weiss requested that the union contracts be examined

to determine if there is a clause that permits outsourcing in certain circumstances. Mrs. Sax questioned the use of overtime to demolish Council Chambers. She noted that she had asked to provide input regarding collective bargaining but was ignored. She suggested that overtime could be approved to fix safety issues for residents versus destroying Council Chambers, as an example.

Mrs. Sax asked if Mr. Ciuni had done an assessment of all the streets and curbs in the city; it was noted that he did not, and this matter will be considered at a future meeting. Mr. Rach requested that curbs be a part of the report card; he pointed out that the notes provided on water line replacements are helpful and easy to read. It was noted that if Mr. Ciuni does not do an evaluation of streets that need to be repaired next year, the engineer brought on board will be asked to do that.

## **5. SCS Engineering Status Update**

Mrs. Sax clarified with Mr. Pennington that Stacey Demers from SCS is doing a four-day on-site assessment Monday, November 6 through Thursday, November 9. Mr. Pennington stated that one of Ms. Demers' colleagues is doing the observation. Mr. Pennington will be the point person for this activity. Mrs. Sax asked about interview schedules for the Mayor, Mr. Pennington, and Mr. Kennedy; it was noted they have not yet been scheduled. Mrs. Sax stated that her interview is on October 17 at 4:00 p.m., and that there are two service staff laborers to be interviewed. Mr. Pennington acknowledged that the employees will be interviewed on-site as they are and more than two will likely be included.

Mrs. Sax referred to a presentation by Mrs. Byers at the October 2 Council meeting; she passed out a document which detailed a bottleneck in the morning at University Parkway west of Milton, near Gearity Schol and expressed safety concerns for children. Since the information provided dealt with trash collection and no-parking zones, Mrs. Sax asked Mr. Pennington if he had a chance to review the comments. Mr. Pennington stated that the first thing to be addressed is having the police look into the possible parking zones. He expressed concern about disrupting the established trash collections right away. Mrs. Sax suggested that a first step could be with Ms. Marshall working with the Safety Committee. Suggestions made by Mrs. Byers included delaying the start of trash collections, the point of pickup, etc. Mr. Pennington assured that Chief Rogers is reviewing the options.

Mrs. Weiss addressed the pickups on University Parkway, and Mr. Pennington noted that the service department begins at 7:30 a.m. Mrs. Byers suggested that the trash pickup be delayed until after 8:30 a.m. allowing school buses to make their stops first. It was noted that there are three different entities of school buses all converging at the same time. Mr. Pennington discussed the concerns. Mrs. Weiss described the observation that some streets have much more trash than others and the time spent. It was pointed out that Mondays are the days with the heaviest trash.

In response to Mr. Rach's question regarding tree pruning, Mr. Pennington reported that it is being reassessed now due to the heavy storm management in the southwest quadrant of the city.

Councilman Rach reported a huge overlap into the street on at 2500 Channing and requested that Mr. Pennington investigate same as it could be a hazard.

Mrs. Sax thanked Mr. Pennington for a robust discussion and looks forward to working together.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. On roll call. All voted “aye”.

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Jeune Drayton., Assistant  
Clerk of Council.

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Sheri Sax, Chair  
Service & Utilities Committee