**REGULAR MEETING OF CELINA CITY COUNCIL – November 27, 2023**

Council President King called the Regular Meeting of Celina City Council to order at 7:00 pm. Council Members Baltzell, Buxton, Clausen, Fleck, and Sovinski were present. Council Member Lochtefeld and Scott were absent. Also present were Mayor Hazel, Safety Service Director Hitchcock, and Law Director Moore and Auditor Shinn.

CM Sovinski made a motion to accept the agenda, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

President King noted a correction. CM Clausen made a motion to accept the corrected minutes, seconded by CM Fleck. Motion passed with a roll call vote 4-0-1 Aye.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

CM Clausen spoke about the Personnel and Finance Committee Meeting that took place on November 13, 2023.

President King spoke about the Committee of the Whole Meeting that took place on November 13, 2023.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**AUDIENCE COMMUNICATIONS:**

Carl Hagerman who resides at 205 Lincoln Drive spoke of an incident that occurred where some teenager and him were crossing paths and neither party wanted to move and let each other pass and a teenager pushed Carl out of the way and he believes that lack of police presence contributed to that event. Carl spoke about recent resigning officers and that the police shortage has not been fixed yet. Mayor Hazel thanked Carl for the question and spoke about the civil service tests that have taken place since the officers resigning and noted that things are difficult but we are working on the recruitment effort and putting money aside and noted that the negative talking points are not helping us in our recruiting efforts. Mayor Hazel spoke about how we have great offers and is looking forward to opening the contracts once SERB certifies the officers’ votes.

Charlene Guingrich, who resides at 316 North Ash Street thanked the Council Members for their service and spoke about the Tree Commission that has recently passed and spoke about possible missed grants that we should be going after and also spoke about her passion for Celina’s trees and this commission.

Jim Stelzer, who resides at 4611 Saint Anthony Road spoke about the officers that resigned and the reasons that were put on the resignation paperwork and that they did not mention going back to where they were raised. Jim also spoke about how an officer was thinking about coming back until someone called Van Wert to tell them their newly hired officer was thinking about coming back and he then changed his mind about coming back. Jim stated his believe that a lawyer who works for our administration called Van Wert’s police chief to tell them about the officer possibly moving back to Celina. Mayor Hazel noted he called to speak to the administration at Van Wert and noted that there was no mention that an officer may be considering going back to Celina and also mentioned about leaving to go work to where they were from is what he was told and that he did not specifically see the resignation letters. Mayor Hazel also noted that he would gladly take these officers back if they are still interested.

Brian Anderson, who resides at 805 East Wayne Street spoke about the employee audit investigation and noted that it is taking about four months for this. Brian noted that we are paying Clemons & Nelson and it seems like they are taking for too long to do these audits. Mayor Hazel noted that his right now is not the same as other businesses right now but mentioned that he has been told that they should have all results by the end of December and also explained that fire wanted to wait until after the contract to do the audit and that is a part of what is taking so long. Brian spoke about how his employer does employee audits and noted that it seems odd that an anonymous audit would be sent out with times and dates and names to compile a roster. Mayor Hazel spoke about how names being on a roster so they are able plan accordingly of how many people they need to send would not bleed into the audit and what comes out during those meetings as that is what is anonymous.

Andy Hinders who resides at 236 Eagle Brook Circle spoke about his life in Celina and spoke about he believes there is a morale problem that derives from a trust problem. Andy noted he will be leaving Celina permanently and noted that recent problems in Celina have made his decision much easier.

**NEW BUSINESS:** (First Reading)

**51-23-O:** An Ordinance authorizing the re-establishment of the Street Improvements Capital Fund, stating the purpose of the fund, the amount to be accumulated, the duration of the fund, and declaring an emergency. Auditor Shinn explained what this does from an accounting stand point and why it needs to be done. CM Fleck made a motion to amend the Ordinance fixing a line-item description, seconded by CM Baltzell. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye. CM Sovinski made a motion to pass to a second reading, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

**52-23-O:** An Ordinance transferring and appropriating funds to memo post the playground equipment paid directly by the Bryson Trust located at Bryson Park, and declaring an emergency. Mayor Hazel explained that no money is actually being paid here and it was already paid for by the Bryson Trust and that this is for insurance valuations. CM Sovinski asked if it had to be done be the end of the year for auditing purposes and Auditor Shinn noted it does not but it would make it easier. CM Clausen asked about the items that were added and Mayor Hazel noted it was another playground next to the zip lines. CM Clausen made a motion to pass to a second reading, seconded by CM Baltzell. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

**53-23-O:** An Ordinance approving the participation in the EcoSmart Choice Program and providing for corresponding electric system rates and requirements. Mayor Hazel noted that some of the larger businesses are looking into and would like to have the option to add solar into their portfolio. Mayor noted that these are renewable energy credits that they would be buying and also mentioned that there would be no cost anyone unless they want to purchase the renewable energy credits. CM Clausen asked if there was anything the City would have to do or any additional cost and Mayor confirmed there would be no additional cost and we would just manage the flow of it. CM Sovinski mentioned that it would be billed through us and that the billing would fit into the capabilities that we already have. Mayor Hazel noted that they started this program within the last couple of years. Mayor Hazel mentioned that all of these programs help keep our rates low. CM Baltzell asked and it was confirmed that the City will have no additional costs for this program. CM Clausen wanted to confirm that we would only purchase this when one of our customers asks us and then we would bill them and give that money directly to AMP and Mayor Hazel confirmed that was correct. CM Buxton asked if this would affect our outside usage and Mayor Hazel confirmed it would not. CM Sovinski explained the process and how it would work for the customer. CM Baltzell made a motion to pass to a second reading, seconded by CM Clausen. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

**54-23-O:** An Ordinance appropriating funds for full prepayment of the outstanding principal amount of the American Municipal Power, Inc. (“AMP”) Bond Anticipation Note (“BAN”), maturing January 23, 2024, and declaring an emergency. Mayor Hazel spoke about why this makes sense for the electric department to pay this off since there is no penalty and they have the funds to do it while still staying above the self-imposed threshold. CM Clausen noted that is amazing news and also spoke about the new electric building. CM Sovinski about the interest rate that we received originally and noted that it was around 4% or so at the time. CM Baltzell made a motion to pass to a second reading, seconded by CM Sovinski. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

**OLD BUSINESS** (Second Reading):

**42-23-O:** An Ordinance to amend portions of Chapter 182 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Celina regarding Municipal Income Tax, and declaring an emergency. CM Clausen made a motion to pass to a third reading, seconded by CM Fleck. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

**44-23-O:** An Ordinance authorizing the Safety-Service Director to advertise and receive bids and enter into an agreement for the 2024 Various Street Resurfacing Projects, appropriating funds, and declaring an emergency. (Amended 11/13/2023). President King noted the amendment was exhibit “A”. CM Sovinski asked of these Ordinances would change if the appropriation was not passed and Mayor Hazel noted that this is not based on the 2024 budget and would come out of the savings account and how getting it in early would help us get on the schedules earlier in the year. CM Clausen made a motion to pass to a third reading, seconded by CM Baltzell. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

**47-23-O:** An Ordinance authorizing the re-establishment of the Fire Capital Fund, stating the purpose of the fund, the amount to be accumulated, the duration of the fund, and declaring an emergency. CM Sovinski made a motion to pass to a third reading, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

**48-23-O:** An Ordinance to make appropriations for expenses and other expenditures of the City of Celina, State of Ohio, during the calendar year ending December 31, 2024, and declaring an emergency. CM Sovinski noted that he believes they should amend the expenditures to add more money to the tree program as well as the Mayor’s incidental line item which should increase from 15 thousand to 33 thousand and the tree program to go from 1 thousand to 20 thousand and pointed out that he believes the first couple years of this program needs to see some success within the community. CM Sovinski stated his belief that they should create a line item to the Mayor’s budget to address possible legal fees that may come up next year for personnel in the range of 15 to 20 thousand. Mayor Hazel mentioned that they may use outside council to help assist our law director and noted that it may cost an upward of 50 thousand. CM Sovinski made a motion to amend the Ordinance having the Parks Maintenance Tree Program go from 2 thousand to 20 thousand and either adding to the Mayor Discretionary Fund or creating another line item depending how the State Auditor feels for 15 thousand and lastly add 50 thousand to possible legal fees next year and possibly in a new line item if that is what the State Auditor recommends, seconded by CM Buxton who also noted that he would like the money added for trees to be separate so they can tell how much is being spent on trees. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye. CM Buxton made a motion to pass to a third reading, seconded by CM Sovinski. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

**49-23-O:** An Ordinance authorizing the Safety-Service Director to advertise for bids and to enter into contracts for City Projects and Capital Equipment for Fiscal Year 2024. CM Clausen made a motion to pass to a third reading, seconded by CM Baltzell. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

**50-23-O:** An Ordinance authorizing the Safety-Service Director to advertise for bids and to enter into contracts for certain materials, services, supplies and equipment needed during 2024. CM Fleck made a motion to pass to a third reading, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

**OLD BUSINESS** (Third Reading):

None.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

Mayor Hazel spoke about the appointees to the Tree Commission who were all passed with a voice acclimation to be on the Tree Commission.

Mayor Hazel also spoke about housing issues that deal with the City of Celina’s CRA and asked to have a Committee of the Whole during the next meeting to review the CRA and also spoke about the process that the City uses to have a recommendation to the school who has the final say in the tax abatements. CM Sovinski asked if this was for a new development and Mayor Hazel confirmed that was correct. CM Sovinski mentioned possible stressors that the City might face with expanding in certain directions. CM Sovinski and Mayor Hazel discussed other factors that go into the CRA and utilities when building or developing housing. CM Clausen asked if administration had an idea of where to expand and Mayor Hazel confirmed they have an assessment of some possible open areas.

President King scheduled a Committee of the Whole on December 18th, 2023 at 6:00 pm to review the CRA.

**FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

CM Buxton asked when the last week for leaf pick up was and it was confirmed that is goes through December 8th, 2023.

CM Sovinski wanted to confirm that administration would address some of his concerns during the Committee of the Whole at the next meeting and Mayor Hazel confirmed that they can show some areas that can be built on.

President King adjourned the meeting at 8:28 pm.

Submitted by Michael F. Didonato, Clerk of Council