**REGULAR MEETING OF CELINA CITY COUNCIL – June 24, 2024**

Council President King called the Regular Meeting of Celina City Council to order at 7:00 pm. Council Members Baltzell, Buxton, Clause, Fleck, Gray, Sanford, and Wolfe were present. CM Fleck was absent. Also present were Mayor Hazel, Safety Service Director Hitchcock, Law Director Moore and Auditor Shinn.

CM Gray made a motion to amend the agenda, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Baltzell made a motion to pass the agenda, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

CM Sanford made a motion to amend the minutes from the 06-10-2024 meeting, seconded by CM Clausen. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Clausen made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0-1 Aye.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

None.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**AUDIENCE COMMUNICATIONS:**

Connie Voss who resides at 335 Godfrey Avenue noted that she reached out to council members before and wanted to reiterate that she does not think we should allow chickens within the city limits because of how they would be policed and the problems that would come from that.

Greg Giesige who resides at 1549 Greenview Drive and spoke about how to be a good neighbor when it comes to keeping bees and noted there are professionals who would be able to help if bees ever were allowed within the City limits. Law Director Moore spoke about the Ordinance that is being considered to allow bees into the City limits and the annual testing that would take place. CM Buxton asked if it was true that local honey is better for someone and Greg noted he has also heard that before. President King noted at the end of the last meeting they decided that an Ordinance for bees should be brought but not chickens.

Ashley Cline who resides at 1566 Greenview Drive asked Auditor Shinn if her office has told administration that they cannot use the half percent additional tax to pay for police and fire payroll and Auditor Shinn noted that her department has not specifically stated that since she took over. Ashley asked if it has been looked into whether that money can be used for payroll and Auditor Shinn noted that she has not looked at the language but confirmed she would. Ashley asked Chief Wale if we currently have a drug task force officer and he confirmed that we do not with the current staffing levels and Ashley asked if there has been a rise in drug related charges and Chief Wale, he does not currently have those statistics but he will attempt to run the statistics. Ashley asked Chief Wale how many open positions are there and how many are have been filled. Chief Wale spoke about how there were five openings and briefly spoke about any possible applicants. Ashley spoke about how we are down five paramedics and that others have been applying elsewhere and spoke about ORC minimum manning and her concern about other fire fighters leaving and us not being able to take care of fires as quickly and efficiently as possible. Mayor Hazel spoke about a Resolution that will be brought tonight and that he would like more funding for six additional paramedics from the County and how Council and administration are trying to solve these problems. CM Gray thanked Ashley for her input and noted he would like to have a safety meeting before the next council meeting in order to be proactive and find solutions. Mayor Hazel spoke about the feasibility study and how that will help with the new facility that they would like to build for the Celina Fire Department. CM Gray noted that having more volunteers could help and helping them go through classes and possibly become full time and Mayor Hazel agreed and noted that we are not the only City struggling to cover a second run and that we cannot sustain or afford the money that Columbus is able to pay. President King scheduled a Safety Service Committee Meeting on July 8, 2024 at 6:00 PM. CM Clausen asked if there would be a point where we would not be able to help with mutual aid and Mayor Hazel confirmed that the Fire Chief would be able to speak about that and how we will cover fire because we have a contract with some townships but we have not been able to take some EMS calls because of staffing but they have some volunteer staffing and noted that New Breman had to help cover St. Marys this past week. CM Clausen noted how we usually get called into those mutual aid calls and asked if there was any way to ensure that the volunteers had to go out and help and not have our fire fighters go out for every run and spoke about our own staffing problems and how we need to make sure we are covering Celina first and foremost. CM Sanford spoke about the firefighter positions and how honorable they are and that we would love to have volunteers who will pick up invaluable training that they will have forever and Mayor Hazel confirmed that the County will cover those charges and they would have to stay for a certain time period. Mayor Hazel spoke about attempting to look at how to recruit and retain while paying firefighters while they go to school. Ashley Cline spoke about nepotism and how her daughter will be graduating from fire school soon and that she believes the City should allow her to work within the City and Mayor Hazel noted that there are state laws about nepotism when it comes to being supervised by an immediate family member. President King asked if a possible work around would be having them on different shifts and Mayor Hazel noted they can look into that and see if anything can be done.

Sheryl Braun who resides at 1560 Greenview Drive spoke about the property tax levy that was in the paper and asked about the $26,000 that the City pays to the County and what that is for and Mayor Hazel noted it was per capita that we pay to the County EMS a certain amount per person in the City. Sheryl asked how much we receive from the County that goes toward the general fund and Auditor Shinn noted that she does not know off the top off her head but she can look into it and find out. Mayor Hazel noted that they currently pay us for three paramedic positions and noted that he recently asked the County to pay for six more paramedic positions. Sheryl noted that while she may be able to afford more taxes some others might not be able to afford it and that may force a no vote on any levy. Sheryl asked about a rumor that she heard that a Michael Didonato received a raise between six or seven steps and asked if that was true because if we have no money how can we afford to give an increase to one individual and Mayor Hazel noted that he went up $2.70 per hour and it hit the general fund for about $1,400 per year. Sheryl asked about the CMERC contract and if all parties agreed to it and noted that they have an Ordinance on the agenda to give another raise and Mayor Hazel noted that it was because the large raises that the other unions received during their negotiations and Sheryl asked if that would possibly start a trend and Mayor Hazel noted that he understands where she is coming from. Sheryl asked about a recruitment and retention problem with CMERC and Mayor Hazel noted that it of course it would help with retention and Mayor Hazel spoke about our Water department for example and how many additional certificates our employees need to have to operate our advanced and complex systems and that is the same case for our other utility departments. Mayor Hazel spoke about the retention for all of the City positions and noted that we have money to fully fund the fire department but are struggling to find candidates. Sheryl noted that she pays a water bill and Mayor Hazel confirmed that the money she pays for her water bill can only pay for the Water department and that they do not use any general fund money. Mayor Hazel spoke about CMERC and their original contract and what changes may come.

**NEW BUSINESS:** (First Reading)

**43-24-O:** An Ordinance to accept the petition for the annexation of 6.75 acres more or less in Jefferson Township to the City of Celina; to be known as Machine-Pro Technologies, LLC annexation. Administration noted that it is similar to Casey’s annexation and that we are providing too much electricity outside of the City limits. CM Clausen spoke about the building and who owned it and administration confirmed that building in not apart of machine pro but owned by the same people and they have spoke about possibly using the field to the north apart of an industrial park possibly in the future but nothing at this time. CM Sanford noted there was no emergency clause meaning it would be read have to wait 30 days after passage before it would be able to be signed and it was confirmed that is what is legally required. CM Baltzell made a motion to pass to a second reading, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

**44-24-O:** An Ordinance appropriating funds from the LWCF Grant Program Fund for reimbursement back to various funds and declaring an emergency. Auditor Shinn spoke about when she first started and how they used matching grants and spent money in certain account lines and now that we have the grant money, we need to move the money back into the proper account lines. Auditor Shinn noted she used a percentage to get the exact dollar amount that would go into the accounts and this is to zero out the LWCF account line. CM Clausen noted that makes sense and made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Baltzell made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

**45-24-O:** An Ordinance appropriating funds and amending various categories within Ordinance 48-23-O as the Fifth Supplement to the 2024 Annual Appropriations and declaring an emergency. Auditor Shinn spoke about the first whereas and the appropriation with Hess Fencing and Safety Service Director Hitchcock spoke about the sand filter and how they learned it needed fixed. Auditor Shinn noted that it takes 8-16 weeks to order the sand filter which is why there is an emergency clause. CM Clausen asked about the life span of a sand water filter and administration noted that it varies based on what you have the sand filter doing within the plant but believes sand filters three and four have lasted about 25 years and does not know exactly when sand filter one and two were replaced but does not believe it was that long ago. CM Clausen asked how it would work with two sand filters down or if they were only going to have one down at a time and administration confirmed we only need three running for what we provide the public but to run the plant at full capacity we would need four sand filters. CM Baltzell made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Buxton made amotion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Wolfe. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

**46-24-O:** An Ordinance authorizing a lease agreement between the City of Celina and the Ohio Marshallese Community, Inc. for the lease of Eastview Park and declaring an emergency. CM Gray asked about the dates of the event and confirmed that it would have to be suspended and noted that it says private but that he thought they also invited the public and it was confirmed that they usually invite from outside the community. CM Buxton asked if it was possible to add a stipulation where they have to put in the requests a month before the event to put a stop to so many short notice events that have to go to council and administration noted that this is the first year they are bringing all of these lease agreements and administration noted it would benefit the City the further we pushed it out and knew about these events. Safety Service Director Hitchcock asked council if they also wanted to have street closures brought to them if it was apart of a festival like the IC festival who is closing down Walnut Street or if the event is okay to get signatures from everyone who lives on that block and administration can just approve it if they have the proper signatures. Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted that a first Friday would like to close down a street and President King noted if someone wanted to throw a block party as another example and administration wanted input from Council and CM Wolfe asked if there have been any problems in the past and administration confirmed there has not been and Council decided to leave it as is with street closures needing signatures from every property owner of the street route or section that is being closed. CM Wolfe noted he believes they want only events in the parks to come before Council and CM Gray noted that he believes it was also all City owned property that Council should be aware of. CM Baltzell made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Sanford. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Clausen made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Wolfe. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

**12-24-R:** A Resolution to approve the creation and participation on the Mercer County joint ambulance district and declaring an emergency. Mayor Hazel noted what this would create and how it would make it possible for the County to create some ballot language for this upcoming election. CM Baltzell asked if there was time to make any adjustments and Mayor Hazel noted the County needs this by that Friday and President King noted it was a Resolution and not an Ordinance. CM Clausen noted he believes this is needed and if it is apart of a County program that helps fund EMT runs then this is something we need to move forward with and help it get done. CM Sanford mad a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. Sheryl Braun asked for clarification about the $2.70 raise and the total amount versus what amount is attributed to the general fund. CM Gray made a motion to pass the Resolution, seconded by CM Wolfe. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

**OLD BUSINESS** (Second Reading):

**39-24-O:** An Ordinance authorizing a lease agreement between the City of Celina and the Driftwood RC Model Boat Club for the lease of the Eastview Park. CM Clausen made a motion to pass to a third reading, seconded by CM Wolfe. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

**42-24-O:** An Ordinance authorizing the Safety-Service Director to enter into an amended agreement with the Celina Municipal Employees Representative Committee (“CMERC”) and declaring an emergency. CM Clausen made a motion to pass to a third reading, seconded by CM Wolfe. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

**OLD BUSINESS** (Third Reading):

None.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

None.

**FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

President King spoke about the light on Wayne Street and Fountain and administration noted that the same controller is used at Holly and Wayne and in order to turn it onto a flashing light on Wayne and Fountain they had to turn Holly and Wayne into a timed light so now it will go on a cycle even without traffic. President King asked about when the flashing light can be dissembled and administration noted it would have to be flashing for 30 days before then can take it down.

At 8:19 pm, CM Baltzell made a motion to go into executive session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee of official, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

President King adjourned the meeting at 9:56 pm.

Submitted by Michael F. Didonato, Clerk of Council