**REGULAR MEETING OF CELINA CITY COUNCIL – August 26, 2024**

President King called the Regular Meeting of Celina City Council to order at 7:04 pm. Council Members Buxton, Clausen, Fleck, Gray, Sanford, and Wolfe were present. CM Baltzell was absent. Also present were Mayor Hazel, Safety Service Director Hitchcock, Auditor Shinn, and Law Director Moore.

CM Clausen made a motion to accept the Agenda, seconded by CM Fleck. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

CM Wolfe made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

President King spoke about a Committee of the Whole that took place on August 12, 2024 that went into executive session.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**AUDIENCE COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** (First Reading)

**54-24-O:** An Ordinance authorizing the Safety-Service Director to accept bids for the Public Works Building Project and to declare an emergency. Administration spoke about the map that was handed out and how the building is intended to be built next to the new electric building as well as a way of funding. CM Buxton asked about the cost of the electric building and it was confirmed to be 2.3 million total. Administration noted it is an identical building but prices have gone up. CM Clausen asked when construction would start and administration would like it to be started and finished in 2025. CM Clausen asked if this property will be maxed out and if any expansion would be possible and administration confirmed it could be expanded toward the north as well as the south. CM Clausen asked how this building compares to what they currently work in and it was confirmed to be about the same square footage but the layout would be more ideal for the equipment. CM Clausen asked about the funding and administration noted that there is enough money in the appropriate accounts if that is what council decided and they can borrow part of the money or all of the money from electric. Auditor Shinn noted that she would have to look into the funding before making a recommendation. Administration noted they would make the building look as similar as possible to the electric building on the outside. CM Fleck noted it would make it more convenient for the workers while noting they are still working on the parking lot and administration agreed. CM Wolfe spoke about moving the salt bin to Touvelle Street and noted it will not be inconvenient for the citizens when they need to get the salt. CM Clausen made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Wolfe. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Buxton made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Fleck. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye,

**55-24-O:** An Ordinance approving a Police Officer Trainee position and authorizing the Safety Service Director and Police Chief to enter into an employment agreement with Police Officer Trainee(s), funding Law Enforcement Academy and related training, and declaring an emergency. Administration made a correction to the verbiage making student plural instead since there is an intent to hire more than one. Administration spoke about “Exhibit A” and gave a brief description of it as well as speaking about how we intend to use these officers. CM Gray noted the academy has started and asked if any potential candidates have been identified and administration stated that has happened. CM Sanford noted that this is a great opportunity for all parties and asked about the civil service and testing for that and administration noted that has already occurred and they have been certified by civil service. CM Buxton asked about the wording in the fourth whereas and asked if it should be changed or looked at and administration noted why it was worded that way but noted it could be changed if council wished. Chief Wale noted it should be based on need and when we have available positions which will hopefully not always be the case. CM Clausen noted that the union, the City, and the police department are all in favor of this and thinks it is imperative that is passes tonight. Mayor Hazel spoke about the benefit these officers will be to the City and how it will help them become more well equipped for the job and training and President King noted that is important that officers are able to trust each other. Chief Wale spoke of an instance where an officer went to a scene and decided this was not the job for them. CM Clausen made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Sanford. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Fleck made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

**56-24-O:** An Ordinance approving a Firefighter Trainee position and authorizing the Safety Service Director and Fire Chief to enter into an employment agreement with Firefighter Trainee(s), funding Firefighter Academy and related training, and declaring an emergency. President King noted that slight verbiage changes to match the last Ordinance. Administration spoke about the difference in cost for training between the two professions of police and firefighter and noted how we need to hire more firefighters. CM Gray noted the limit of three based on the last legislation and Mayor Hazel noted three would put them at fully staffed and that anymore would not be ideal for the department as they need fully trained people working shifts. CM Gray asked about the start date and administration noted there are different start dates depending on where they go and confirmed the need for three firefighters to be fully staffed. CM Sanford asked where the school would take place and administration confirmed there is one in Columbus but there are others. CM Sanford asked if the schedule could be adjusted and Mayor Hazel noted the dates are likely set in stone. President King spoke about the training that they will receive and what they are able to do to help the department while they get certain certificates. CM Gray noted that firefighters need to be 18 so it is likely easier to find people for these positions. CM Clausen asked if there is something in place for EMT’s and administration noted the county pays for all EMT training. CM Clausen asked to make sure the union, fire department, and City are all on the same page with this and administration confirmed that to be the case. CM Gray confirmed that all firefighters need to have their EMS training within a year of being hired as a firefighter. CM Gray noted that there was an issue this weekend when we were in Rockford and then received two calls within the City and administration confirmed that to be the case. CM Wolfe made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Gray made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Buxton. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

**57-24-O:** An Ordinance adopting certain trainee positions, schedules of salaried and hourly ranges, employee benefits along with personnel provisions for Non-Union Officers and employees as well as provisions not covered in contracts with union employees of the City of Celina, Ohio, to repeal all Ordinances or parts thereof inconsistent herewith and declaring an emergency. Administration noted that the police and fire trainees did have to be in a contract and this is the one where they would fall into, and also spoke about matching the scales on non-union employees based on the MOU with CMERC. Mayor Hazel also spoke about the different agreement for the police and fire trainees and their pay as well as increasing the wages for the auxiliary firefighters. President King asked about the hiring process and what training they need before being hired and administration spoke about anyone being able to start as a firefighter trainee and having one year to complete firefighter courses and will then become a firefighter and so on with their training and positions. Administration spoke briefly about the pay for this position. CM Fleck made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by CM Clausen. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Clausen made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Sanford. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

**OLD BUSINESS** (Second Reading):

None.

**OLD BUSINESS** (Third Reading):

None.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

Mayor Hazel spoke about Yorkshire and Barnsbury going through the complete reconstruction and the Mill Street project will be bid out around November and this will help the projects meet the right deadlines the next year.

Mayor Hazel spoke about the Bryson Trust paying to replace the slide at the Bryson Pool and also help replace the visitor side dugout at Montgomery Field. Mayor Hazel spoke about their fiscal year and possibly adding another playground at Westview and how beneficial it is to the community with these projects.

Mayor Hazel spoke about school starting soon and what they might do at some of the intersections and how traffic has picked up. Mayor Hazel spoke about the elementary school not being in that area in more which should help with traffic. President King asked if the six hundred-thousand-dollar price for the traffic light seemed high and administration confirmed that was for the light as well as realigning the roadway.

Safety Service Director Hitchcock spoke about the intersection and how they attempted to put it back to loop detection but there was a system failure and if it is an expensive fix we would wait until the whole intersection is redone and also noted they are getting quotes to fix he handicapped door.

CM Gray asked about a video that he saw on traffic patterns put out by the school and administration confirmed that they are supposed to leave only to the right and that there have been no complaints as of now. CM Gray asked if this would change the study and administration confirmed that it is pretty much done but they are waiting on the final report and that they are only looking at the area surrounding the school.

**FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

CM Sanford asked about the bees Ordinance and Law Director Moore noted he is still waiting on his point of contact for more information to get the Ordinance accomplished.

CM Sanford noted if someone receives a pink slip it may be letting them know they may be offered a tree in their area if they are interested in having one.

CM Sanford spoke about the pickle ball courts and how much fun it was as well as noting that the four new courts will be great and congratulated Aaron Schott on completing his paramedics classes.

CM Buxton spoke about the industrial park land and if there was any opportunity to bring in businesses. Administration noted that it was expensive to develop right now but they have not had inquiries about additional businesses and are still working on the housing issues. Administration also spoke about the election year possibly scaring off some buyers and developers. Mayor Hazel spoke about the additional apartment building that will be coming in the future.

CM Clausen asked about the monthly budget summary and that the “other sources” revenue was high and Auditor Shinn noted that was interest which is higher right now than before.

CM Gray asked about the housing and the tax abatement and administration noted that would be up to Council.

CM Wolfe noted he has some vote yes for EMS signs if anyone is interested in those.

President King noted that he also was at the pickle ball courts and there were so many people that the four additional courts will be helpful and noted that the fencing is done. President King also noted that there are some interested parties in buying wind breaks to go around the fence and Mayor Hazel spoke about the lights that will be active once the additional courts are up.

Chief Wale spoke thanked Council and administration for working with him and the union to get all of Ordinances and agreements done. Chief Wale spoke about the revenues and what that means for hiring police officers and asks that Council looks at the budget with an open mind and try to find a way to fund all position that they had filled in 2023. Chief Wale noted he has a couple retirements looming and that we are working with what we have but it is getting harder to do with the staffing and noted the service and public safety are suffering and noted some instances of events that have occurred recently where the shortage in manpower has negatively impacted the community and investigations that have been hindered. Chief Wale spoke about how we already have less police officers per one thousand residents than what is recommended and also spoke about how use of force is likely to increase when you do not have enough officers for the events that are occurring which brings up the liability of the City. Chief Wale noted that is we were fully staffed would they be firing people because of the budget.

CM Clausen asked about the risk being too high and if we should be calling the Sheriffs office for some of these calls and Chief Wale noted if they are available, it could help but these are calls where we cannot wait for additional officers to arrive.

CM Sanford asked if anyone had the exact number that is recommended to have per one thousand residents and Chief Wale noted he did not have that number on him. CM Sanford asked for those numbers as well as the staffing to the Cities that are right next to us with a similar population.

CM Gray noted that during the ride a long they went on some calls and their professionalism was impressive and so obvious and that the police officers spoke about how they are some of the best trained officers in the area and noted he would like to help provide the tools to the Celina Police Department to continue their training and that includes personnel. Chief Wale confirmed that personnel is important and being fully manned will help with training as well as the level of safety service the City receives. Chief Wale noted some of the training that has taken place and how impressed instructors have been with their movements and tactical decisions. Chief Wale also noted that when his officers deal with the public they are very professional. CM Gray noted he plans on riding along with all shifts to better understand how he can help.

President King adjourned the meeting at 8:17 pm.

Submitted by Michael F. Didonato, Clerk of Council