

16TH REGULAR SESSION:

Kenton City Council met in their 16th regular session on August 23, 2021, at 7PM in Chambers. Present: President Joel Althaus, John McEntee, David Beazley, Ray Lawrence, Pegg Wren, Robin Jones, Law Director John Schwemer, Mayor Lynn Webb, & Safety Service Director Cindy Murray. Absent: Antwillia Davis & Patti Risner.

Prayer given by Mr. Beazley and the Pledge of Allegiance recited.

MINUTES:

Althaus: Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting?

Beazley: Which set?

Althaus: Actually, good comment David, I'm glad you said that. We have several (3) sets of minutes. Are there any additions or corrections to those? Hearing none, they'll stand approved as submitted. Before we move on with the agenda, I'd call your attention to new business. You'll see we don't have any items there, but I'd also call to your attention that at your station was Ordinance No. 21-021 and that was discussed at length in the Finance Committee. Basically, it involves 4 different groups of items that have come up of late & one of those in-particular involves overtime for Fire which is very significant as far as timing. I'd ask does anyone have any objections to that item being added under new business at tonight's meeting? Then we'll entertain that item under new business.

CITIZENS REQUESTING TIME TO SPEAK:

None

DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES:

Auditor Brian Hattery: Pam's here! I'll leave it up to her if she wants to say anything.

Chief Dep. Auditor Pam Romanko: I just want to thank you guys for all of your prayers & support throughout this crazy time since the middle of May. It's good to be back, I'm not quite in the office everyday going at it as I have a little bit of recuperating to do. I'm weaning slowly off the oxygen but more quickly than they thought I would, so I can go for a while without it and turning pale...so don't get nervous watching me stand up here. Ha. But I just really want to thank you for all of your thoughts & prayers throughout the last couple of months.

Chief Bruce Donnelly: I'll wait until comments.

Chief Dennis Musser: I have nothing at this time.

COMMUNICATIONS/PETITIONS:

Althaus: I don't have any...well Brenda is showing me a liquor license transfer...

Beazley: It's a change in the corporation...

Althaus: Okay, we'll deal with this in new business for a change in ownership at the Marathon at 925 E. Columbus Street. Are there any other communications or petitions?

MONTHLY/ANNUAL REPORTS:

Althaus: You had a few in your packets that included the KPD & KFD. Are there questions on either of those while both Chiefs are here? Utility Dept. y-t-d revenue...any questions there? Then we have the WWTP Discharge Flow report, & the monthly Water Loss report from Cindy's side of things...

Beazley: May I ask a question here, Mr. President?

Althaus: Go right ahead.

Beazley: I note we are down from 37% last month to 28% water loss. Is that luck of the draw or do you attribute that to more awareness & better practices?

Murray: More awareness, better practices.

Beazley: Thank you. I wanted to get that on the record.

Althaus: We're still trying to find what magic number is acceptable or typical...I think it's a moving target. Finally, we have the Public Works monthly report. Any questions for Cindy or Mayor Webb on that?

Murray: I just want to chime in & I can't believe I'm defending new software, but this is all tracked manually. So the hours that they worked is a manual guess as to if it's in street, water or sewer. With new software it would be probably a lot more accurate. They know how many hours they should've worked so at the end of the month they make sure it all matches up.

Althaus: Along the lines of reports, you see Tree Commission minutes from 8/12/21. Questions?

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

None from Nuisance or Safety.

Althausen: Finance has a written report in front of us plus they had a meeting this evening. David?

Finance, Beazley: I would update the balance of Council that we began our budgeting process on top of our normal monthly work that we do. So, over the next 4-5 meetings, we'll be completing the arduous task of trying to balance our expenses against our revenues. We did come to an agreement on revenues tonight thanks to the hard work of the administration, the auditor's office & dept. heads. The compilation looks reasonable & accurate, so we'll be moving forward with each dept. through departmental meetings & what have you. So, there will be a standing Finance meeting at 6PM every Council session going forward until we produce a budget. All Councilmembers are welcome to join us & hear the ongoing discussions.

MOP, Wren: MOP has had a couple of meetings but we're still working on what we're meeting for, so there will be a report at a later date.

OLD BUSINESS:

ORDINANCE NO. 21-019, 2ND READING, TITLE ONLY; AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE YEAR 2021 FOR THE CITY OF KENTON, OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Althausen: Either one of these two, if not both of them...the hope was to pass them tonight but obviously we can't. We'll also bring up the new item in new business that was added to the agenda. David, if you could refresh our memory, is it this one or both of them that really needed passed?

Beazley: I think it's this one that has the most pressing need to get dollars into the correct hands but if we're going to consider holding a special session these would all come under a third read and could be passed with whatever members are there. If we're fortunate enough to garner 6 attendees, we could address the new business at that time because of it's urgency as well.

Althausen: Right, if we include it in the agenda.

Beazley: Sure. All are urgent bill paying needs.

Althausen: Yes, there was a comment in here in your committee report about the need. So I'd throw this out there...in some of our research, well actually our Law Director's research let me clarify that because he's the one that does all the research on this, but we have clarified that if we're going to have a special session number one we need to provide 24 hrs. notice which means for one meeting. If we needed two for example, you can't just have them back-to-back on the same night. So let's keep that in mind. More importantly in the new business we're going to consider we have to remember we have to have enough there to pass it under emergency also or we don't gain the efficiency needed. So we have to have 6 to suspend the rules & the question would be maybe Thursday evening at the same time as normal Council at 7PM in chambers to meet in special session to consider the item that will be brought up in new business & to also consider these 2 items in old business. How would that fit everyone's schedule? Antwill's we're basing that on Pegg's comment...

Wren: I'm pretty sure it's Wednesday she'll be back...it was just like a 3-day thing.

Althausen: I'll say Antwill really apologizes for the bad timing...it just didn't work out. Anyone not able to do that? All 5 of you could? Okay, let's plan that at 7PM on this Thursday with the intention of the agenda being these 2 items and the item we'll have in new business. Any questions on item A under old business? I forgot to bring my packet from 2 weeks ago...

ORDINANCE NO. 21-020, 2ND READING, TITLE ONLY; AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR TRANSFERRING FUNDS FOR THE YEAR 2021 FOR THE CITY OF KENTON, OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Althausen: Again, I'd ask if there are any questions? Is there any old business we don't have on the agenda?

NEW BUSINESS:

Althausen: Okay, we added Ordinance 21-021 so Brenda if you'd please read that...

ORDINANCE NO. 21-021, 1ST READING, TITLE ONLY; AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS AND FOR TRANSFERRING FUNDS FOR THE YEAR 2021 FOR THE CITY OF KENTON, OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Althausen: There's an explanation attached with that...most of Council was at the Finance meeting so I'd ask any Councilmembers if you have any questions regarding this legislation?

Beazley: Obviously, Mr. President, the big item here is the Fire overtime and without the special session we could conceivably be showing a negative appropriations balance in that account until we're able to rectify that with legislation.

Althaus: Okay, if there are no questions, we'll let move to a 2nd reading at our special session. So, we'll have 3 items at our special session...2 up for 3rd read & 1 up for 2nd read. Is there any further new business? Oh, in your packet was the change in ownership for the Marathon Station...I always ask Chief Musser if there is anything he'd add...

Chief Musser: No problems.

Althaus: Council has the opportunity to have a hearing or waive a hearing.

Motion by Mr. Beazley & second by Mrs. Wren to waive the hearing.

Althaus: Any discussion? **(Roll call vote, 5 ayes; motion carried)** Okay, I'd also ask that we consider a motion to excuse Antwillia who is at a conference and excuse Patti.

Motion by Mrs. Wren & second by Mr. Lawrence to excuse Antwillia Davis & Patti Risner.

Althaus: Any discussion? **(Roll call vote, 5 ayes; motion carried)** Okay we've taken care of business, unless someone has something else to present...

COMMENTS:

Murray: If you haven't been over the Leighton Street bridge, it is back open & the guys & County crew did a great job working together. I think it's the first time...well, it's not the first time the 2 have worked together, but the guys are very proud, the street crew is very proud of the work they did. It was a unique way they did it that was recommended by the County so drive across it & tell the street guys they did a great job. The Transfer Channel...it's all complete, except for a few cleanup items. We had a walk through so for the most part that is a complete project. Lynn Street, they are starting the taps...the main line is in and they're going to start the taps that go to each individual house. The last thing I have is HB 168. In case you've heard about it, this is appropriations through the State and you can get up to \$5 million for construction projects and you can get up to \$250,000 for engineering for future projects. It all goes through the County Engineer...we have met with Luke and we're going to be applying for \$5 million construction grant on the water side of Phase II, and a \$5 million construction grant for sewer & storm on Phase II. Then we're going to be applying for \$168,000 engineering for the replacement of the east side water loop that we have a lot of leaks on, as part of our Asset Management Plan. So, I just wanted to bring you up to date on that. We will be applying this week & then by the end of September or mid-October we should find out if we get the money or not. But it's a big pot of money that is split and they have a complicated scoring system & everything else, but we're going to throw our hats into the ring. That's all I have. Does anyone have any questions?

Chief Donnelly: I just have a couple of things. Right now we're doing some confined space training with the public works guys so we're working & learning how to work with each other with confined spaces. We're doing the training out at Heritage Cooperative...they've allowed us to use their facility because they have safe & good places to train in. This isn't the first time and we really appreciate them for allowing us. Chuck Swinehart was out there watching what we were doing and the instructor & myself visited with him and kind of saw what all they do & everything. It's just kind of one of those relationship building things where not just us & businesses but all of us amongst the City employees are working together too. The other thing we have coming up in September is we'll be having a Civil Service Eligibility Test, so all the applications are turned in for that. I would've liked to see a few more applicants but we get what we get and it looks like there are some pretty good candidates. So we'll get our eligibility list back up. That's all.

Bart Steele: My name is Bart Steele & I ride a scooter because I'm unable to walk any great distance. I'm handicapped or disabled and I know many others who are as I am who cannot walk very far. As I've said before & as Dave & I have spoke about, the repairing of these sidewalks or putting sidewalks in where there are none should be addressed ASAP. I do not know of any others, but I know myself I've tipped over a couple of times because I've been trying to avoid these sidewalks. I've talked to the Mayor numerous times about the intersections and walkways from the street to the sidewalks at places there are immense holes and if people aren't paying attention they could stick their foot in there and fall down & hurt themselves big time. I myself on my scooter have fallen in these holes and it's not good for the scooter for things to happen to it out of the ordinary. I was just trying to find out a time frame...I know the finances aren't available at this time, but a time frame for when the finances might be available to repair or mask the problem? By that I mean putting makeup on these to temporarily fix these holes so people don't fall in them. In fact, I've talked to the Mayor about allowing me to put asphalt in them & filling them up & she told me don't do that because the workers will be very upset. So...

Althaus: If you see a particular spot let us know where that is.

Steele: I shall. I know right over here...I lost my bearings...

Murray: Detroit Street...

Steele: Right, the main road out here & Detroit at the intersection there is a very small area where I'm able to go through otherwise it's about 2 ½-3 inches deep...these areas are all around the square and if you like I'll ride around & tell you where they're located at.

Althausen: Anytime you see a spot in your travels that is dangerous, I know the administration wants to know that because they'll add it to the list for our street crew to take a look at.

Steele: I shall.

Althausen: The larger issue Bart is sidewalks can be a tricky business because a lot of that cost would go back on the property owners where the sidewalk is located & not necessarily the City. The other side of that is a lot of times damage is caused by trees that might be in the right-of-way or tree lawn. We have a fairly active Tree Commission that's been very aggressive in getting these old trees out of here...identifying them so we can get them out of here. Bart, we appreciate you reminding us of this. The dollars involved with updating all of the sidewalks across the City and putting in new sidewalks where there are none are significant.

Steele: I realize for the majority of the populace it's not a real problem but for the minority such as myself who are disabled, they are an immense problem. It just depends on your outlook...if you're like yourself you say well we do not have funds but the best thing to do is find a way to make funds to possibly generate (can't hear)...

Althausen: Bart, I'd say personally the sidewalks are a major issue to me too because I don't see the best. I have personal experience with that where I've had to walk to work when I wasn't able to drive and I agree I found at that situation at time in my life how bad our sidewalks can be. We are not the most pedestrian friendly city, and I don't think anyone would dispute that, but most small towns are not pedestrian friendly. We have started working on this...one of the main parts of Phase II from the downtown improvements would involve the 9 blocks in the center of town and the sidewalks in that area would be updated. So that is the first step. We're constantly trying to identify those sidewalks that are closer to schools...back when the new school was built there was a lot of money that the school put into the sidewalks on the new street. So my answer is that we are starting & have started. Our ability to do them all, I'm going to answer that it's impossible to do them all at one time with lack of resources, manpower and finances.

Schwemer: I think one thing the administration can & will do is after we get done with this Phase II we will have a little better idea on where there are additional items with our stormwater, our sewer, & our water. The EPA has mandates that we have to continue on...we can't just stop at this 9-block area. I think to me what sounds like the best idea is we look to see what areas we're doing those type of improvements because the last thing we want to do is have new sidewalks in, then a year later have new waterline work & end up tearing those new sidewalks up. So I think that is something the administration can look at as we develop those projects which are getting mandated by the EPA. So if we're doing a street & we're doing new waterlines we can strongly look at those areas and I think that would kind of be the highlight of where we go because we're going to be forced to go down that path. Again this 9-block area helps with the EPA, but it's not going to solve our problems & that's something we'll work towards. I think that's something we'll look at as those projects come up to see what we can do.

Steele: What I'm suggesting is not putting in new sidewalks, just masking and like repairing areas on the sidewalk...not a complete refabrication of the sidewalk just parts of the sidewalk that are out of the ordinary.

Althausen: That's where you can help us Bart...if you see areas like that let us know where.

Steele: Right, I will write them down.

Althausen: Again, I want to remind you if they're in a residential area the responsibility of that repair goes onto the owner.

Steele: What is causing the problem is the roots of the trees and the trees are in the parkway and the parkway is, according to everyone I've talked to, part of the City.

Althausen: I commented on that and that's what makes it a difficult situation to address. But especially crosswalks, as you mentioned Detroit at Franklin, that's something our street crews will do everything they can to fix something like that.

Steele: Alright, thank you very much.

Beazley: I did make contact with Councilman Davis & she will be available for the Thursday evening session. Second of all, Chief, I apologize if I'm too old to sit for your Civil Service Exam. Ha. And please report specifically to Patti that I miss her. Thank you.

Wren: I just want to say welcome back Pam. This is the first time I've seen her back so I'm glad to see her. And, I do have a card here for Patti that I'm taking to her Thursday if anybody would like to write her a little note on it. That's all I have.

Jones: Just welcome back Pam and thank you for hanging in there. We're glad to have you back.

Mayor Lynn Webb: First off, I just want to say a big thank you to Chase Fleece. He was our summer help for mowing and he really took that job head on. He took command & took charge and showed great leadership. I think our parks & swimming pool area and our properties looked really nice this year. So as he went back we picked up Steve Evans and he's going to finish out the rest of the mowing season. And we still have Dillon James and he is with the school so he does his work study and he's just been a great asset in keeping our parks and properties mowed up nice. So I just wanted to thank Chase...he did an excellent job. Also, I just want to publicly say it is so good to have Pam back, who brings not only her intelligence and her mind back, but there is something in our atmosphere that she just makes a lot better. She was missed, she is needed on her time and we'll get it all back to rolling. But I appreciate her dedication. If that isn't the thing of dedication for what she's been through...she's working her tail off so I appreciate that. Also, this past week we had an incident out at the quarry...most of you know about the car that was put in. That was another display of great teamwork from our safety guys from the Fire Dept., the dive team, our Police Force. It's a unique thing that we have a dive team and that's not just fire, we have policemen that are on that dive team too. So once again it shows this wonderful collaboration of teamwork. They are professional, they're efficient, they're effective, they know what they're doing and it's great to see. Also, in that same sense, Cindy & Chief Donnelly & I were at the Fairgrounds and I just want to publicly say or pass it on that Sheriff Everhart gives his shoutouts to Chief Musser, the police force, Detective Kemmere for doing the fine job that our guys do and the leadership from Chief Musser and it's well noted. Once again, we're one of those counties where we all work well together and we benefit from it to a great degree. Finally, this year the City of Kenton is going to have a fair booth so anybody who wants to sit and talk and ask questions...OHM is going to sit in with us on a couple of nights and we'll run the whole downtown project so maybe some people can have more of a view of what streetscape will be or if they have questions more on the dig or just overall questions...we're just going to put ourselves out there and Sean Root & Taylor are working that angle. It could be fun to say the least. I'm looking forward to it so if anybody wants to play in the sandbox...that's it. Thanks.

Althaus: Thank you. I'm glad Lynn that you put it the way you did...Pam's dedication over the last several months is beyond describable. In fact, it had me worried because you were probably working too hard. You had all of us worried about that.

Romanko: My doctors thought it would be good for me to come back at least part-time on July 1st for 20 hrs. a week working from home.

Althaus: I will say this, it got me thinking about some things from a bigger picture that we need to think about as a city...things we've already talked about, how much our reliance on a few key positions has become and how spoiled we are that we have very good people especially in a couple of those key positions...we need to continue working as a team to try to address how to move forward better.

Romanko: We've spoken about it different times at different levels with the administration about restructuring and reorganizing.

Althaus: There is a lot of stress put on people and I know both Chiefs know that too. There is a lot of stress that we put on some of those key people...we've got to figure out a way to deal with that. Along those lines, I talked to Patti at length on Friday and I plan, if it works with her, to go over there tomorrow to get some items from her. Her intent is to not be back this year, but I'll have more definite details once I see her face to face. Hopefully it will fit with everyone's schedule to do that tomorrow afternoon. So just as a reminder, we've set a meeting for this Thursday at 7PM. I don't anticipate it taking long...the key people I need are the 5 of you & Antwillia. Anyone else can come, but you don't have to. We'll make it quick and get you out of here. Obviously, the reason for that is we don't have a regular meeting now until Sept. 13th so that's 3 weeks from now. It would be after the Fair, and I encourage everyone to go the Fair as much as you're comfortable doing things like that. Remember we'll have more traffic in town that week so be cautious of folks coming through town. I don't think I'm missing anything, am I? So I guess if there are no objections, we're adjourned until Thursday evening.