

Regular

February 17,

2011

Ontario City Council met in regular session on February 17, 2011, in the City Offices, with Council President Daniel Zeiter presiding. The meeting opened at 7:08 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following persons were in attendance when roll was called: Council members Paul Williams, Larry Arnold, Charlotte Hellinger, Leon Blackwell, Mark Weidemyre, and Barry Lewis, Mr. Zeiter, Mayor Larry Collins, Law Director Allan Sowash, and Clerk of Council Cathy VanAuker. Also in attendance were a number of interested employees and citizens.

Mr. Williams made a motion to excuse Mr. Cinadr from this evening's meeting. Mr. Blackwell seconded the motion. At roll call, five members voted Aye, one Nay by Mr. Lewis, and the motion passed.

The minutes of the regular Council meeting of February 3, 2011 were presented for approval. Mr. Weidemyre made a motion to approve the minutes, and Mr. Williams seconded the motion. At roll call, five members voted Aye, zero Nay, one Abstain by Mr. Arnold and the motion to approve the minutes passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

Don Speakman, 104 Bethel Lane, came before Council to support the efforts on researching the water rates and the necessity for an increase. Mr. Speakman also praised City workers for their service to the residents providing leaf pick-up, snow removal, and water main break repairs during the worst weather conditions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Williams reported the license plate reader obtained through a Homeland Security grant was installed. In one day the reader scanned approximately 1,200 license plates. License plate numbers of suspects can be entered into the database. This process aided them in locating and arresting the individual responsible for breaking into cars.

- Mr. Williams will initiate a fund raiser to raise money to purchase incidentals for the new Command Vehicle. More information and tickets will be available soon.

Mr. Arnold said he met with department heads and appreciated the feedback he received. He will schedule a Streets Committee meeting soon to prepare a list of streets that are in need of repairs. The amount of grit mixed with salt has been reduced providing a better effect.

Mrs. Hellinger emphasized the need to increase the utility rates but is waiting for a reply from Mr. Swinehart on the difference between his numbers and those presented by Mr. Poland.

Mr. Blackwell scheduled a Personnel Committee of the Whole meeting on February 24, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. to discuss the Working Ordinance and the recommended changes.

Mr. Weidemyre said the Engineer has completed the list of necessary steps to develop the Industrial Park property. These will be discussed at the Economic Development Committee meeting on February 24, 2011 at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Lewis had no report.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Collins presented the State of the City report to Council.

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On January 14, 2010 the year began with a dinner for all employees and spouses at the Brown Derby Roadhouse, which brought the entire City of Ontario family team together. It was a great evening and at no cost to the city, as it was privately funded.

2010, however, was a year like none other in the history of the City, formerly the Village of Ontario, and was due to the tough economy and reduced income. The 2009 Budget was \$10,905,872.00 and the 2010 Budget was \$7,386,600.00 for a total reduction of \$3,519,272.00. We were able to have a successful year because of the great people who work in the Offices and the Service and Safety Departments. It was a combined effort of Council, the Administration and the employees to live within our means and still provide the services to the citizens of Ontario, which is the reason we exist. We finished 2010 financially in the black.

In 2010 we granted no requests from departments for purchases, we bought no trucks or police cars and we, sadly, had to cancel and/or reduce funding to some causes we had supported in the past. We did not replace employees who retired or left employment with the city.

MAYORS COURT saw the coming of a new Magistrate, a new Clerk of Courts along with the Law Director and Assistant Law Directors, giving the court the flexibility to not only do Ontario Mayor's Court, but also handling the cases that were transferred to Mansfield Municipal Court. The number of tickets handled in court were 1,436. The amount of past due fines collected was \$135,677.55 along with current collections of \$170,352.52 for a total collected in 2010 of \$306,030.07. The Clerk of Courts received commendation from the Ohio Supreme Court for her collecting of past due fines from 1994 to 2010 and her efforts in collecting delinquent income taxes.

The POLICE Department had 9,851 calls for service, 5,178 additional citizen contacts with Dispatch, 2021 traffic stops, 961 traffic citations issued, 61 OVI offenders arrested, 889 misdemeanor criminal summons issued, 602 misdemeanor criminal summons issued for theft, 513 crash reports taken and 473 times an officer helped someone get into their locked car.

The Police Department was chosen by the Richland County Terrorism Task Force to receive money from a grant from Homeland Security to purchase a COMMAND VEHICLE for use in emergency times of crisis or disaster here in Richland County. The vehicle is now the property of the City of Ontario and has a total value of \$100,000.00. \$47,101.00 was grant money, \$11,906.00 was donations from local businesses and \$2,300.00 was from forfeitures. The City has under \$3,000.00 invested in the vehicle. Equipment was transferred from the former Command Vehicle by volunteers.

The SAFETY TAX generated \$993,961.71 in 2010, which has greatly helped with budget concerns.

There were NEIGHBORHOOD WATCHES, coupled with TOWN HALL Meetings, held in each of the four wards with the Chief of Police, the Mayor and the Ward Councilman present to report to the citizens and answer questions. The meetings were well attended and very informative.

The Mayor's VISION TEAM, comprised of 18 Ontario citizens and government leaders, met six times in 2010. The assignment was to develop a strategic economic plan for Ontario, to begin the process of development of the city owned acreage set aside for an Industrial Park, to expand the composition of the City Web Site and to develop a promotional piece for individuals and businesses inquiring about locating in Ontario. One of the outgrowths of the Vision Team was to have our first Concert in Marshall Park in September, of which we hope we will see more in upcoming summers.

The FOURTH OF JULY FESTIVAL is an annual attraction to the entire Richland County area. A debt of gratitude is owed to the many volunteers who spend countless hours preparing and planning this most excellent event that brings thousands of people to Ontario to celebrate America and the freedoms we enjoy in this great land.

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The RECREATION Department has activities planned throughout the entire year for many age groups and especially the children and youth in the summer. The PARKS are used heavily by Ontario Youth Sports for baseball, soccer and softball, with 700 youth annually participating. The park Pavilions and ball fields are rented to a number of people for various occasions. The SENIOR CENTER is used on a regular basis for a variety of weekly activities as well.

The ZONING Department issued 43 residential building permits with fees of \$1,340.00 collected with a valuation of \$1,032,525.00. 18 commercial permits were issued with fees of \$900,000.00 collected and a valuation of \$2,124,800.00. 61 sign permits were issued with fees of \$2,924,800.00. 11 new businesses came to Ontario and 10 businesses left Ontario.

17 Bow and Arrow Deer Hunting permits were issued in 2010. We received \$100,000.00 from First Energy as a result of the citizens voting to be part of the Electric Aggregation Program for reduced rates for residential and commercial electric users. We were able to buy the piece of property adjacent to Stowell Park for parking purposes at the park at one half the tax value. Merle Orewiler retired from the Service Department in March. One policeman left employment with the City to enter the military in April. The income tax forgiveness was reduced from 1.5% to .5% for residents living in Ontario and working outside the city in 2010. The new Home Road Lift Station was completed in 2010 with a grant of \$193,845.20 from OPWC and the City paying \$203,329.08 for a total cost of \$397,174.28, along with the oversight of the City Engineer doing the inspection and project management. State Route 309 and Park Avenue were resurfaced at a total cost of \$3.503 million dollars with the city cost of that total being \$808,226.00. We were a Tree City for the fifth year in a row.

There are several Boards and Commissions, who are appointed, who serve the City on a regular basis. The list includes: PLANNING COMMISSION, CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION, SHADE TREE COMMISSION, CITY RECORDS COMMISSION, TAX BOARD OF REVIEW, RECREATION BOARD and the BOARD OF HEALTH. We are indebted to these individuals who give most valuable service to the City.

The WATER, STREETS, SEWER AND PARKS Departments have also served the city well in 2010. Snow and Ice removal in the winter and the mowing of grass in the parks in the summer occupy a significant amount of time and cost. Leaf and Brush pick up is also part of their work. There are road repairs and crack sealing that must be done. The water department experienced 28 water breaks in 2010, at an average cost of \$1,000.00 per occurrence. Administration and members of Council attended a meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency on April 29 in Bowling Green, Ohio. In that meeting we received a mandate with a deadline to make significant improvements in the Rock Road Lift Station. With that in mind, Council enacted a 3% water rate increase and a \$10.00 per quarter surcharge for Capital Improvements in the Water Department.

I strongly urge all citizens and businesses to use Ontario 44906, 44903 or 44862 as your mailing address and encourage those who send you mail to do the same. www.ontarioohio.org is the city website address.

Ontario has had a STRONG PAST and we look forward to a BRIGHT FUTURE, as 2011 unfolds. We continue to have businesses moving to Ontario and we have regular inquiries about new businesses wanting to move to Ontario and we are very hopeful that as the year progresses we will see the local economy getting stronger, even in these economically challenging times.

We are indebted to the great citizens of Ontario, whom we all are here to serve. We would encourage you to attend City Council meetings the first and third Thursdays of each month with caucus at 6:15 P.M. and Council at 7:00 P.M. here at City Hall.

As Mayor, it has been my honor and privilege to serve this community and to represent the City of Ontario at many gatherings around the area.

May God continue to bless the City of Ontario.

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Mr. Williams pointed out the decline of income to the City since 2006 which was approximately \$12 million and is anticipated at \$7.5 million this year.

LAW DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Sowash had no report.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Mr. Weidemyre made a motion to amend Ordinance No. 11-08 by adding \$5,000 to Fireworks, line item 101-301-52341. Mr. Arnold seconded the motion. Mr. Williams said he did not agree with adding this appropriation due to the current economy. Mr. Weidemyre said the festival committee is all volunteers and the festival brings an economic benefit to the community by filling the hotels and restaurants. Mr. Lewis was in agreement. Mr. Blackwell was also in agreement, stating the funding was reduced this year by 50% for a worthwhile community event. Four members cast their votes Aye, two Nay by Mr. Williams and Mrs. Hellinger, and the motion passed.

CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE NO. 11- 08

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF ONTARIO, OHIO FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2011 AND EXPIRING DECEMBER 31, 2011.

Hearing no motion to suspend the three readings of Ordinance No. 11-08, Mr. Arnold read Ordinance No. 11-08 for the first time, by title only.

At 7:38 p.m., there being no further business to come before the meeting, the same was adjourned upon a motion by Mr. Williams and a second by Mr. Blackwell. At roll call, six members voted Aye, zero Nay, and the motion to adjourn passed.

President of Council

Clerk of Council