

Regular

September 18, 2024

Ontario City Council met in regular session on September 18, 2024, in the Municipal Building with Council President Eddie Gallo presiding. The meeting opened at 7:03 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present during roll call were Council members Troy Sapp, Dave Rehfeldt, Kyle Webb, Josh Bradley, Rose Feagin, Sherry Branham-Fonner, Council President Eddie Gallo, Mayor Kris Knapp, Service-Safety Director Adam Gongwer, Chief Tom Hill, and Clerk of Council Cathy VanAuker.

The minutes of the regular Council meeting of September 4, 2024 were presented for approval. Hearing no corrections, the minutes were approved as presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Webb will meet with the Mayor and a technology company on Friday to discuss upgrades for the Council Chambers and Conference Room.

Mrs. Branham-Fonner reported the Personnel Committee met this evening where the Mayor provided an update on the new HR position. Further research is necessary to determine options on cost effectiveness and quality of service. The Committee decided to table the ordinances on the agenda, Ordinance 24-13 and 24-14.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Knapp reported:

- The Police Department will attend Council meetings once a month to present department updates.
- In April 2024, Culver's was asked to complete a traffic study. The result determined an exclusive south bound left turn lane was not warranted on Lex-Springmill Road. Culver's paid for the traffic study that was completed by TMS Engineers.
- Ontario won two awards, which were on display, for Earth Stewardship from Richland County Soil and Waste. The second-place award was for a Government Entity. The prestigious Star Award was for going above and beyond the community effort, which was achieved by the City partnering with the School. Due to the number of volunteers, they were able to clean up a very large area. Mayor Knapp will attend the October School Board meeting to present the award to Cathleen Johnson's Leadership Group that participated in the event.
- Committees were asked to submit projects for the 2025 budget. Funding will be included for the military tank project.
- Marshall Park activities:
Saturday – Bill Brown Invitational. Dunlap Drive will be closed until mid-afternoon.
Sunday – Touch-a-Truck from 1 – 3 pm.
Monday – Color Run, school sponsored for fitness. Dunlap Drive will be closed mid-day.

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SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Gongwer provided the following update:

- Street Department employee Bill Flanagan was awarded the 2023 Cooperator of the Year from Richland Soil and Water. Mr. Flanagan is a master gardener and over the past 10 years worked on transforming and maintaining the landscaping at the Nature Park located at the Richland County Fairgrounds.
- Postings are on the website to keep the community informed of events, such as the Earth Stewardship Awards, the closing of the Spray Park at the end of September, Trick or Treat, and Touch-A-Truck.

Director Gongwer read a letter from K.E. McCartney that responded to questions from property owners next to the Menards project and the release of Menard's bond.

POLICE DEPARTMENT'S REPORT

Chief Hill reported:

- Currently, four officers are out for a variety of reasons. This has increased overtime and makes it difficult because they like to focus on training for the CALEA assessment.
- The department has a new CAD system. They are working on an accurate calls-for-service report to show how busy they are and the type of offenses so they can direct their services where they are needed. The current count shows calls-for-service are up substantially over last year because there are more people in the city, especially on weekends.
- Officer Roose and Sgt. Bly have facilitated new training by bringing 12 different training organizations to the area. Previously they sent officers to training and paid for rooms and meals but by hosting the training they get some free registrations and don't have expenses for amenities. Training topics have included: Leadership Training, Tactical Medical Training, Managing Critical Incidents, Rescue Task Force Instructor Training, and Social Media Training. Every year Ohio requires 24 hours of CPT (Continuing Professional Training) and the state will reimburse up to 60% of the officer's salary. They recently learned they can get reimbursed up to 40 total hours of training.
- The FLOCK System, license viewing system, has been a great asset. The Criminal Division determined in 60% of the cases the vehicle involved was identified.
- Another helpful component of the RMS System, the new CAD system, tells the solvability rate of the crimes and calls for service.
- Three officers were added to the Violent Fugitive Task Force. This makes a total of four officers on the Task Force. They will receive extra training in tactics to find people and will network with federal partners.
- Officer Rod Roose was promoted to Team Leader of one of the two County SWAT Teams. This is a great honor.
- Chief Hill thanked Council for their support toward Officer Dylan Bailey. No officer should have to fight for the benefits they deserve. Officer Bailey will return to transitional duty in early October.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Mrs. Sherry Branham-Fonner complimented the Police Department and Fire Department for their support by visiting a 4-year-old-boy throughout the day during his family's garage sale and how special that gesture was to the child.

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PUBLIC COMMENTARY

Craig Hunt, 3680 Park Avenue West, inquired if changes were needed in training the police dog now that marijuana is legal. Chief Hill responded that it wouldn't because when the dog detects something they don't know what type of substance was found so the officer can perform a search. Training may have to be adjusted if they get another K-9.

- The SWAT truck hasn't been delivered due to the backlog in what is being sent overseas for the military.
- The banner at the back of the visitors' bleachers at the school looks beautiful.

CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION

Mrs. Branham-Fonner moved to table Ordinances No. 24-13 and 24-14 and return them to committee for further clarification, second by Mr. Sapp. Six members cast their votes aye, zero nay, and the motion passed.

ORDINANCE NO. 24-13

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO RECEIVE A SALARY EQUIVALENT TO THAT OF THE SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR POSITION WHILE THE MAYOR IS SERVING BOTH ROLES FOR THE LESSER OF 45 DAYS OR AN APPOINTMENT IS MADE TO THE SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR POSITION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. (AS AMENDED)

ORDINANCE NO. 24-14

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AN OFFICIAL TEMPORARILY ACTING IN A CAPACITY OTHER THAN HIS OR HER ORIGINAL CAPACITY TO RECEIVE THE PAY OF THAT POSITION WHILE TEMPORARILY ACTING IN THAT POSITION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

At 7:38 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Mr. Webb, second by Mrs. Branham-Fonner.

/s/ Eddie J. Gallo, President of Council

/s/ Cathy VanAuker, Clerk of Council