

September 3, 2015

The Gallipolis City Commission met in special session on Thursday, September 3, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. at the Gallipolis Municipal Building, 333 Third Avenue, having complied with Section 9 of the City Charter.

Commission President Steven Wallis called the meeting to order and gave the invocation.

Upon roll call, the following members were present:

Steven E. Wallis, President
 Albert "Tony" Gallagher, Vice-President
 Michael W. Brown, Member
 W. Matthew Johnson, Member

Others attending were:

M. Eugene Greene, City Manager
 Adam R. Salisbury, City Solicitor
 Annette M. Landers, City Auditor/Clerk/Treasurer
 Dean Wright, Gallipolis Daily Tribune
 Josh Wellington, 93.1 WNTD Radio
 Ronnie Lynch Joy Elliott Mike Fulks
 Dave McCoy Keith A. Sheets Christi L. Johnson

President Wallis announced that there would be a work session added to the agenda. He opened the floor for nominations of a new City Commissioner to fill the unexpired term of Mr. Jay Cremeens. He encouraged the Commissioners to give extra consideration to candidates who have already "put some skin in the game" by running for the office.

Mr. Gallagher stated that he had asked three people about serving, with two declining. Mr. Troy Johnson was willing to serve, but failed by one month to meet the minimum two-year residency requirement.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to appoint Ms. Lori Fisher Bailey. She has served on the Commission before and could jump right in. Mr. Gallagher asked if she was the lady who was on the Commission before and resigned. Mr. Johnson answered that Ms. Bailey did not resign, she just did not run for another term. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Mr. Brown made a motion to appoint Mr. Michael Fulks, seconded by Mr. Gallagher. Mr. Gallagher asked the City Solicitor what the procedure would be for voting. Would Mr. Wallis be voting, thus setting up the possibility of a two yes to two no vote? Mr. Salisbury affirmed that this would be a possibility, in which case the motion would be defeated. Upon voice vote to appoint Mr. Michael Fulks to the unexpired term of Mr. Jay Cremeens, Mr. Brown and Mr. Wallis voted yes. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Gallagher voted no. Motion defeated.

There being no other nominations forthcoming, the Commissioners agreed to meet again in special session on Tuesday, September 8, 2015, at 7 p.m. to again attempt to fill this vacancy. The Commission needs to be prepared to also address vacancies on the Sinking Fund Board.

President Wallis opened the work session. The goal of this session is to brainstorm ideas to identify possible new streams of revenues and reductions of costs in the General Fund, a continuation of discussions that the Commission began in the budget sessions this year and has re-visited periodically since then.

The Green Sewer Construction Project bids were opened today. The eventual operating revenues from this project will be handled in the WPC Enterprise Fund, but President Wallis wondered if there might be some service that the General Fund could contract to provide that could result in a revenue stream for the General Fund. This question was directed to the City Solicitor. After some discussion to clarify the nature of the question, the City Solicitor offered to get together with the City Auditor to discuss the matter further.

For a cemetery property that falls within the jurisdiction of a township, can the township fund a portion of the operation of the cemetery? The City Manager answered that he thought that the cemetery on Mound Hill had been annexed into the City many years ago. Chief Elliott added that there had been an issue years ago concerning jurisdiction of the Gallipolis Police Department in the cemetery. He thought that was when the annexation took place. According to the City Solicitor, if it is not inside the City, then ORC Section 517.10 & 11 say that the township would be responsible for the care.

We are considering the cost savings of our own detention center. President Wallis asked if it would be possible to use a corrections officer to transport prisoners rather than the more expensive commissioned officer. There was some discussion of this topic, with input from the City Solicitor, Fire Chief, and City Manager. Mr. Salisbury said that they do video conferencing as much as possible to cut down on the cost of transporting prisoners to hearings. He also noted that the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections specifically says that corrections officers do transport prisoners, among other duties. The consensus was that corrections officers can transport, and, in fact, have been used to do so in the past.

On the topic of the sale of city-owned surplus property, the Commission is still deciding which parcels to designate as surplus to sell. The main reason to consider such a move is that it would change tax exempt property into tax-generating property. We would want to annex any property that we own outside the city limits either prior to sale or as a condition of sale.

President Wallis explained that the General Fund's two major sources of revenues are property tax and income tax. He has had the City Solicitor look into the possibility of enacting a sales tax because he keeps hearing that some municipalities have done so, but so far this line of inquiry has come up empty. Income tax revenues have suffered from the recession and will suffer further cuts due to HB5. Now there is another bill that has been introduced that would exempt those living outside a municipality from paying taxes on income earned within the municipality. If passed, this would cut our revenues to an unsustainable level.

Mr. Johnson spoke about economic conditions, which require that we cut all that we can, while doing all we can to entice businesses and residents to locate in town. Mr. Brown remarked that if the airport would locate outside of the city limits, it would free up a very large parcel for development into tax-generating properties. President Wallis asserted that the airport relocating was unlikely due to the recent large investment of \$1 million. Mr. Johnson mentioned that Huntington has a user fee that they charge non-residents working inside the city. He wondered if we could impose a similar fee if this bill passes.

President Wallis noted that the sales tax was originally meant to fund counties, with the income tax meant for the municipalities. He asked the City Solicitor to send a letter to the Attorney General to

get a definitive answer on whether a municipality could impose a sales tax. Mr. Salisbury agreed to do so. Of our 3,300 residents, only around 800 pay income tax. If we could enact a sales tax, it would be fairer for everyone. The electorate would need to be informed of the need for such a levy. Mr. Gallagher said he would like to see how the County's levy for the fairground does on the November ballot. The earliest that we could be bring anything before the voters would be the spring 2016 primary.

Concerning the recent controversy about charges for clean-up in the parks after events, President Wallis explained that there is no additional charge if the organizers clean up themselves. Mr. Greene added that the current park reservation form has printed on the back that the City can recoup extra costs incurred, which sounds fair to all. Mr. Gallagher observed that people are wanting to know in advance what to expect in the way of additional charges. Mr. Greene explained that the new forms that they are creating will have the wording to make that clear. They will not start using the new forms until January 1, 2016 because most of this year's events have already been scheduled. For the Hoops Project, he removed the charge for overtime and apologized to the event's organizers.


There was a brief discussion of the township fire contracts, which are coming up for renewal at the end of the year. One township has no fire levy, but there has been discussion of having all of the fire levy proceeds, whether from the townships or from our own fire levy, be deposited in their entirety into our fire levy fund to run the complete operation of the fire department, not just capital purchases. Currently the General Fund handles the operations of the department, with capital expenses covered by our own fire levy.

The Police Department budget, with annual expenditures of approximately \$1.2 million, is the largest cost center in the General Fund. We have been reducing staff through attrition, with some retiring and others going to other agencies. The proposed detention Center could bring in some revenue to pay for more staff. President Wallis asked if we could use someone other than commissioned police officers to monitor intersections during parades. Mr. Johnson suggested asking the organizers of the parades to provide staffing or to pay for police overtime. Mr. Greene explained that the City's problem is that the department is already so short-staffed. It compounds the problem when arrangements have been made for police coverage and then the parade is cancelled at the last minute. We are left paying officers overtime for their minimum 2-hour call-out and then must pay them again when the parade eventually is rescheduled. It would be less expensive if we used either volunteers, with police back-up by radio, or firefighters at minimum wage. Chief Elliott remarked that organizers have provided their own workers in the past. He offered to bring the topic up at the next meeting of the Gallipolis Volunteer Firefighters to see if there would be any interest in working events.

President Wallis emphasized that the Commission is continuing to seek any and all ideas for getting through this budget challenge. He stressed that we are all in this together and we need everyone's participation. This certainly will not be the last meeting on this topic.

There being no further business to come before the City Commission, the meeting was adjourned.


Clerk, City Commission


President, City Commission