

December 13, 2016

The Gallipolis City Commission met in special session on Tuesday, December 13, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. at the Gallipolis Municipal Building, 333 Third Avenue, having complied with Section 9 of the City Charter.

Commission Vice-President Michael Fulks called the meeting to order. Mr. Wallis gave the invocation.

Upon roll call, the following members were present:

Michael C. Fulks, Vice-President
 Roger P. Brandeberry, Member
 W. Matthew Johnson, Member
 Steven E. Wallis, Member

Others attending were:

M. Eugene Greene, City Manager		
Adam R. Salisbury, City Solicitor		
Shelly Clonch, Asst. Auditor/Clerk		
Ronnie Lynch	Randy Breech	Mary Lee Marchi
Jon Lynch	Brett Bostic	Susan Phillips
Keith Elliott		

Commission received the minutes of the December 6, 2016 meeting prior to this meeting. There being no corrections, objections, or additions, these minutes were approved.

The City Manager stated that department heads are turning in their budget requests for 2017, with most at or less than last year's amounts. He has been talking to the State about money available for paving of streets. The lady there is willing to come down and discuss the matter, but needs buy-in from the legislative authority before doing so. Mr. Brandeberry asked if there would be a local match required. Mr. Greene said there was not. The Commissioners expressed their support for seeking these funds.

Mr. Greene said that his main reason for calling this meeting was to discuss enforcement of the ordinances we already have on our books regarding deteriorated properties within the City. Everyone wants to encourage more people and businesses to come into the downtown area, but many of the buildings are not up to Code. This cannot be done overnight and the City would need to help the property owners. The Commissioners would need to be behind any efforts because they would be getting the calls from disgruntled property owners. Chief Elliott spoke about the need for fire inspections for the safety of people, property, and fire personnel. Mr. Wallis said that an inspection program would be valuable for property owners to inform them of problems and allow for remediation plans. He said probably 90% of owners don't even know what the codes are. Mr. Fulks stressed the importance of consistent enforcement of the code, so people know we are serious and not engaged in "just talk."

Mr. Salisbury spoke of the problem of going through the courts. Some property owners don't respond until they are taken to court. Others have no interest or ability to make the fixes, so the City ends up having to spend the money for demolition. Mr. Wallis agreed that this is a hard situation, partly due to lack of financial resources for the City to enforce the laws that we have enacted. Mr. Greene said that we need to guide property owners and work with them. Chief Elliott said that his department has only conducted about thirty inspections this year. They used to do over one hundred. This goes back to the lack of resources to hire staff to do the inspections.

Mr. Breech talked about the problems he has experienced with commercial development. People want to move into buildings, but cannot because the buildings are crumbling. When the State comes in to inspect the properties, the project gets shut down because of violations. There are a lot of people going elsewhere until we tear down some of these dilapidated properties. However, nothing is being done and the problem grows worse. The ordinances state that buildings are to be inspected annually, but it is not being done. Commercial development will not happen until things are cleaned up.

Mr. Johnson said that he agreed with the City Manager that we need to get this cleaned up regardless of the backlash. Mr. Fulks observed that we have the tools to get something done. We just need to get someone to get it done. Mr. Greene said that we have two people to do the work: one for the fire inspections and one for the code. He intends to move forward with the Commissioners' knowledge and blessing.

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


Clerk, City Commission


President, City Commission