

October 31, 2022

The Gallipolis City Commission met in a special session/work session on Monday, October 31, 2022, at 5:00 p.m., at the Gallipolis Municipal Building, 333 Third Avenue, having complied with Section 9 of the City Charter and Section 121.03 of the City Codified Ordinances.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by an invocation and Commission President Tony Gallagher calling the meeting to order.

Upon roll call, the following members were present:

Albert "Tony" Gallagher, President
William "Bill" Thomas, Vice-President
Michael W. Brown, Member
R. William "Bill" Jenkins, Member

Others attending were:

Dow W Saunders, City Manager		
Shelly L. Clonch, City Auditor		
Ronnie Lynch	Dottie Chestnut	Monte Merkel
Abraham Gontijo	Catherine Gryszonek	Chris Bamman
John Ferragonio	Lori Hall	Kristen Ward
Katie Marcum	Ollie Paxton Tipple	Tracy Jackson
Chris Kimmel	Greg Hall	Shawn Lane
Angie Hanes	Heidi Rainey	Sherri Kimmel
Leeanna Hughart	Dave Russell	Abby Russell
Charlotte McGuire	Donna Barnes	Rayonna Stinson
Jeff Boyer	Sandra Plantz	Kevin Plantz
Stacy Robinson	Jack Jackson	Randy Breech
Ashley Durst	Sonya Hatom	Tasha Penwell
Jim Allie	Jeri Allie	Eric Robbins
Crystal Wright	Bill Mangus	Charles Huber
Aarika Stanley	David Leaphart	Christina Marcum
Sahvana Boggs	Jonathan Ogden	Scott Foote

The purpose of this special meeting was to discuss the drug problem and the homeless on Court Street. The issue was brought up at the October 3rd meeting of the Gallipolis City Commission by Mr. Scott Foote during the privilege of the floor. It was then determined that a special meeting would be held for further discussions.

Many agencies and volunteers were in attendance including Court Street Ministries, Integrated Services, Square One, Cardinal Recovery, and Sojourners. Also, Court Street business owners attended that included Zack and Scotty's, Poppy's, Kimmel General Store, and Right Lane Driving School.

Mr. Jack Jackson opened up the floor on behalf of Court Street Ministries and Poppy's Restaurant. He was made aware the ministry's patriotism was being questioned and stated we should be thankful to have an agency that helps recovering addicts and the homeless. They have helped people from his own ministry with clothes and essentials. He said this is a religious effort on their part and our constitution gives you freedom of religion and that is what the ministry is doing. Most of the room acknowledged that they were in attendance this evening in support of the Court Street Ministries. Several volunteers and agency representatives spoke up in support of the ministry in helping provide food and shelter to the homeless and those fighting addiction.

Mr. Bill Mangus, Commander of the VFW, spoke and said they also do a lot for homeless veterans and that it is not the ministry that is being attacked but it is homeless and drug addicts that hang around

Court Street and harass people. He said he feels we have a group of people that want help but do not want to help themselves.

Ms. Crystal Ward with the Gallia County Sheriff's Office said that she deals with these individuals daily. It is not always a drug problem but a mental health issue. Unfortunately, a lot of the agency's funding is shot and the state hospitals are full making it impossible to get a bed anywhere.

Mr. Scott Foote of Zack and Scotty's said these individuals chase his customers away. He said if we just continue to feed these people the problem is not going to get better. These individuals need to be helped with their mental issues or nothing is going to ever be solved. Mr. Foote's opinion was that the "pharmaceutically challenged" should be helped out of town and not in town near businesses or a daycare.

Mr. Shawn Lane, a current business owner, and Mr. Chris Kimmel, a former business owner on Court Street, spoke up and said they have not now nor in the past seen a drug problem on Court Street. Mr. Lane told Mr. Foote that if you have part of your dining area outside on the sidewalk, you are going to have issues with people talking to your customers.

Ms. Lori Hall of Poppy's spoke and said that she makes sure those in need get clothing and food and she also works with all of the agencies to get them help. She told Mr. Foote that she wanted to work with him, work together, and make the community a better place.

Mr. Gallagher asked Chief Boyer his opinion on the drug issue. Mr. Boyer said that the drug epidemic is an increasing problem all over the United States and can't be narrowed down to just one street.

The City Manager stated that at our previous meeting we agreed to have a session on the complaints on Court Street not Court Street Ministries. He appreciates everyone here and the interest everyone has. Police presence has been increased in the area and he has had some feedback that the issue was getting better. He is encouraged tonight after hearing there is a lot more recovery out there than we realized.

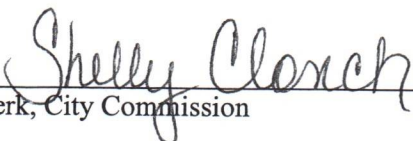
Individuals present from the different agencies that help the homeless and those with addiction said that their beds stay full. Mr. Kevin Plantz with Square One, a 16-bed facility, and Code 10 ministry that helps to put individuals in hotels for up to 3 nights, said he sees those in need every day. Mr. Plantz also stated that the reason Square One was in town was so that individuals with no transportation would be able to get to the store or a job nearby. He suggested the Commission help, along with himself, by reaching out to those in higher government positions and state agencies to help seek grants.

Mr. David Leaphart of Integrated Services said that funding is there. He is on the board with COHHIO and there were 256 million federal dollars to apply for to combat opioid addiction. COHHIO only had four proposals submitted to them with none of them being from Gallia County. Mr. Jenkins stated that is the problem right there.

Mr. Gallagher asked if there was anyone in the room willing to take the lead on a coalition to combat the issues of drugs and homeless. Mr. Jack Jackson stepped up and invited everyone to New Life Lutheran Church at 5:00 p.m. to discuss possible resolutions.

The special session was concluded. The Commission held a work session with ABM following the special meeting to discuss proposals for energy-saving solutions for the City.

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


Clerk, City Commission


President, City Commission