

MINUTES OF SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING, CHEVIOT, OHIO

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November 4, 2004

The special session of Council was called to order at 7:10 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of prayer. Roll call was taken and the following were found in attendance:

Mayor	Samuel D. Keller
President of Council	James E. Morganroth
Law Director	Mark G. Waters
Safety Service Director	Steven O. Neal
Council 1 st Ward	Michael J. Murray
Council 2 nd Ward	Dennis T. Dinkelacker
Council 3 rd Ward	James F. Sunderhaus
Council 4 th Ward	Debra A. Gooch
Council at Large	Kathleen S. Zech
Council at Large	Charles L. Norman
Council at Large	Michael J. Mestemaker

In addition Police Chief Voss, Fire Chief Clark, Maintenance Foreman Tom Braun and many other City employees were in attendance. The normal proceedings were not formally dispensed but normal protocol was not followed.

Mayor Keller stated that he called this meeting to discuss the failure of the Operating Levy on November 2, 2004. He stated that he was encouraged to see residents in attendance. He informed everyone in attendance that the papers were notified of the meeting which is being held to generate ideas. He stated that there would be no votes taken this evening.

Mayor Keller stated that the City needs to have money in accounts for the first quarter of 2005 to operate. He informed the public that on November 3rd that he called a meeting of all departments. This meeting lasted about 12 hours. Mayor Keller figures that the City will be about \$125,000 short. Mayor Keller explained that cuts will need to be made and that several measures have already been enacted. A zero overtime policy has been enacted except in life safety issues. Recycling and leaf collection have been suspended. Snow removal will only be available during regular city hours of 7:30 A.M. until 4:00 P.M.

Mayor Keller proceeded to explain that the City is looking to generate ideas and investigate the pros / cons of them. He explained that the Council Finance Committee will work with the City Administration to get through the next year. He explained to the public that there is no "nest egg" and no extra money to use. One possibility for some extra spending cash is to use money in the parking lot fund. Mayor Keller will be drafting a letter to the Parking Lot Commission to use some of the money that is in the fund for City operations (instead of for parking lots and meters). The money in this account comes from parking meters in the City of Cheviot.

Auditor Dan Murphy explained that the City normally receives tax revenue at the end of the first quarter and sometime in September.

Mayor Keller explained that the City is committed to meet payroll but that at this time he does not know what will happen. He stated that a letter to the City employees would be coming out tomorrow.

A member of the public asked how the public will be informed about the changes. Mayor Keller explained that a letter will go in the Western Hills Press and that a message has been placed on the main voice mail messages when residents call City Hall or the Maintenance Garage. He also explained that he was hoping that the Cincinnati Enquirer would publish an article as well. Mayor Keller did admit that he hopes that the public will not call 911 to ask questions since 911 costs the City for every call.

Mayor Keller did state that he will not allow the criminal element take over Cheviot and that he is committed to keep Cheviot nice. He also stated that in an effort to keep costs down, one of the Maintenance crew will work in the Cheviot Building Department as a building inspector since Charlie Meyer will be out for awhile. He explained that Councilmember Zech will continue to work to improve the minimum housing standards here in Cheviot.

Mayor Keller explained further that the non-essential things like recycling, leaf removal, and snow removal have been cut.

A resident asked if the Cheviot Fieldhouse could be closed to keep costs down. That was discussed at length.

Councilmember Debbie Gooch explained that there are only two services that a City is required to provide. This includes Police and Fire. She stated that everything, including these two departments will be reviewed. Mrs. Gooch explained that she spoke with the Board of Elections and that the City of Cheviot could have a special election in February. The cut off date to get the paperwork to the Board of Elections for the February election is November 24.

Mayor Keller explained that he will be out of town over the next week. He went on to say that it is important that the residents express their thoughts via letter or email to the members of City Council.

Greg Nolan, the City's Tax Commissioner, asked if there was any way to get money out of other accounts. Mayor Keller explained that the City will take \$15,000 out of the \$17,000 in the sidewalk assessment fund.

Jackie Voss asked if the City could re-instate a garbage fee. It was explained that if the residents paid \$10 a month, the city would bring in about \$500,000 per year.

Someone then stated that if the City were to pass the levy in 2005, the City would not collect on that until 2006. Mrs. Gooch asked if we could write the levy in a way which to make it take effect in 2005. The answer was no that is against to code.

Mr. Mestemaker then stated that the City would need to decide tonight if there is a need for a special election. There was much discussion.

A City employee asked what measures were taken to advertise to the public and what will be done in the future? Mayor Keller explained that the City only had a small amount of time to work the campaign and that the City could use no City money to advertise. He explained that he wrote a letter to the Western Hills Press, got information into the Cincinnati Enquirer, hosted two public forums, did one literature drop, aired a program on Cable Access, and all members of Council worked at the polls pushing for Issue 2 to pass.

Someone asked how many votes difference was there. The totals were 1984 against, and 1921 for. The total difference was 63 votes. Mr. Neal explained that he suspected that the levy would have passed if this was not a presidential election.

Mr. Ray Lamb explained that he felt that many didn't vote for the levy because they care about Cheviot but can not afford anymore since they are on a fixed income. He felt that many think that the City isn't operating with in its budget.

The Tax Commissioner, Greg Nolan, explained that is the City placed a Garbage fee on the public, that they would pay more than if they had passed the levy. He also explained that the City has been changing from an owner occupied to a rental base.

There was much discussion and argument about the garbage fee.

Mr. Neal asked how the City will operate in 2005 since the levy failed. There was much more discussion about a Garbage Fee.

It was explained that both the Democrats and Republicans in Cheviot paid for the literature drop for the tax levy. Mr. Neal also explained that due to budget cuts the City can not pay for the nativity scene, but that that the Cheviot-Westwood Community Association would pay for this year's nativity scene.

The Police Chief asked why don't the rental fees of the fieldhouse pay for the costs of the fieldhouse? There was much discussion and it was decided that this would be looked into. It was explained that
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Cheviot School was given free use of the fieldhouse as part of an agreement to keep Cheviot School open while it was being renovated. This translates to more income tax for the City.

Dan Murphy explained that \$8 a month for a garbage fee would be about the same amount of money that the residents would have paid if they had passed the operating levy. Dan Murphy suggested that maybe a one year garbage fee be in-acted until the levy could be passed and added to the 2006 calendar year. He then suggested that the garbage fee could be made renewable so that if the levy fails then the City can keep the garbage fee in effect. Rich Gannon suggested that he would rather pay a garbage fee than pay Rumpke. Mr. Neal read off garbage fees that several other communities charge.

Mrs. Gooch explained that the City would need to pass a resolution tonight in order to get a special election in February.

A few suggestions like not bagging the meters at Christmas and stepping up tax collections were suggested.

Mayor Keller suggested that the City Council break from the larger meeting so that it can discuss some of the suggestions that had been presented. Council adjourned into a separate meeting at 8:31 P.M.

There was much discussion about when the levy should be placed on the ballot and whether or not to keep the amount of the levy the same. There was discussion about holding longevity pay until the 4th quarter with the assumption that the levy would pass. Mr. Mestemaker made a motion *To Certify To The Hamilton County Auditor A Request That The Hamilton County Auditor Certify To The City Of Cheviot The Tax Levy Information Listed In Section 5705.03(B) Of The Ohio Revised Code; And To Declare An Emergency*. Mrs. Zech made the second. The motion passed 7-0 by voice vote and was assigned as RES04-22.

A special meeting will be called once the City gets the certification from the Auditor. Another meeting was set for November 10, 2004 at Cheviot City Hall at 7:00 P.M. to discuss how to get through 2005.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting by Mrs. Zech with a second from Mr. Sunderhaus. The motion passed 7-0 by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 P.M.

Ryan T. Zech
Clerk of Council

James T. Morganroth
President of Council