

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING, CHEVIOT, OHIO

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October 28, 2008

The Public Hearing on the proposed Public Works Fee was called to order at 6:37 P.M. The following were found in attendance:

Mayor	Samuel D. Keller
President of Council	Deborah M. McKinney
Safety Service Director	Steven O. Neal
Council 2 nd Ward	James Babey
Council 3 rd Ward	James F. Sunderhaus
Council 4 th Ward	Greg J. Stautberg
Council at Large	Kathleen S. Zech
Council at Large	Dennis T. Dinkelacker
Council at Large	Steven L. Braun
Assistant Auditor	Patty Henry

President McKinney explained the format of the Public Hearing to all in attendance and then turned the meeting over to Mr. Stautberg. Mr. Stautberg then explained to everyone the City's current financial situation and why the City feels the need to enact a Public Works fee. Mr. Stautberg also informed everyone present that due to the need to realize all funds from the fee during the 2009 calendar year, the City would have to bill the fee in two \$65 increments on the first two water bills of 2009.

Mr. William Miller of Cheviot asked if the fee is for trash collection or if it goes to the general fund. He added that the fee for 2005 has still not been removed from his tax bill. Mayor Keller informed Mr. Miller that the 2005 fee would not have been attached to a tax bill unless the owner of the property did not pay it directly to the city. There was much discussion and the Mayor said he will follow up with the Auditor. Mr. Stautberg said that the fee is for trash collection, not for the general fund. Mr. Sunderhaus clarified this by saying that trash collection is currently paid for from the general fund, and the fee will be used to supplement this fund to cover trash collection. Mayor Keller said that the City is looking at other options for 2010 and beyond, including a possible levy increase, adding that the State of Ohio did not allow the City to put the Garbage Fee on the ballot because the City already has the power to enact this without a vote.

Mr. Cook of Cheviot said that he lives in a two family home by himself and that he feels he should only be charged as a single family dwelling as a result. Mayor Keller informed him that the billing is based off of what is listed on the County Auditor's website, and that he can change his listing from two-family to single family by contacting the Auditor's office.

Mr. Voss of Cheviot informed Council that he owns a condo and wanted to know how he'd be charged. Mayor Keller informed him that it would be based on how many dumpsters he has and how many times they are picked up during the week. Mr. Voss asked why condos are billed differently than residences and why they can not be billed individually. Mayor Keller informed Mr. Voss that there were many reasons, mainly that the condos use dumpsters rather than individual cans. Mr. Voss asked if he could come to City Hall to find out what the average price per unit in his condo would be and was told he could by the Mayor. Mr. Voss then asked if the Condo Association would get the bill; Mr. Neal said they would.

Ms. Haya of Cheviot asked if leaf collection would continue in the City, as it had been disconnected in the past due to budget shortfalls. Mr. Neal informed her that leaf collection has already begun and will continue. Ms. Haya then asked if Section 8 properties would also be subjected to the fee; Mayor Keller informed her that every resident and business in the city will be charged.

Ms. Joan Thomas of Cheviot asked why residents are being charged on their water bills. Mr. Stautberg replied that collection would be a tremendous hardship on the city with the limited resources we have available, and that water works currently provides this service for several local communities at an excellent rate. Mayor Keller added that the City does not have the staff to handle collections.

Ms. Van Kern of Cheviot asked why the fee will now be billed in just two increments, as this could put a burden on the city's elderly population; what fee Water Works is charging the city; and if this fee

would appear separately on the bill. Mr. Stautberg said the charge would appear separately and that the City had to charge the fee in this manner to realize all funds from the fee during the 2009 calendar year. Mr. Stautberg said that the charge from the Water Works to the City is 5%, adding that it would cost the City more to do it on our own. There was much discussion. Mayor Keller added that State law mandates that cities balance their budgets, so it was imperative that all funds were collected during 2009.

An unidentified resident asked why landlords are being assessed the fee instead of their tenants. Mayor Keller said that as a business owner, it is up to the landlords to pay the fee. Another resident asked if he can opt of this service, as he feels the taxes he already pays should cover this service. Mrs. Zech said that no one likes the fee and that the City is doing everything possible to expand its tax base, but added that something had to be done now or this service would have to be dropped immediately. Mr. Stautberg stated that the City's budget has been stretched as far as possible in every area and that City Council is looking at all possible options for the future. Mr. Sunderhaus added that every department draws its funds from the general fund and that it is not earmarked ahead of time.

Another unidentified resident said that one of the reasons he moved to Cheviot is our public services and that he supported the fee. Another asked if Westfest money could be used to supplement the general fund. Mrs. Zech replied that the CWCA sponsors Westfest and not the City, but added that the CWCA has been very generous donating money to the city already.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Stautberg with a second from Mrs. Zech. The motion passed 6-0 by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 P.M.

Matthew D. McGowan
Clerk of Council

Deborah M. McKinney
President of Council