

**City of Maple Heights
Regular Council Meeting Minutes**

Maple Heights Senior Center

April 16, 2014

Council President Jackie Albers called the meeting to order at 7:23 p.m. Councilwoman Edwina Agee of District 7 gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Clerk of Council Katherine Unger called the roll.

ROLL CALL: Those present were Council President Jackie Albers, Council Members Alex Adams, Toni Jones, Anthony Cefaratti, Ron Jackson, Bill Brownlee, Richard Trojanski, and Edwina Agee.

Also present were Law Director John Montello, Finance Director Irene Crowell, Chief Richard Maracz, Fire Chief John Drsek, and Human Services Director Linda Vopat. Mayor Jeffrey Lansky, and Engineer Ed Hren were absent and excused.

MINUTES: Mr. Trojanski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jackson to approve the minutes from the Regular Council meetings on March 19, 2014. All voted aye, none opposed; the motion passed.

COMMUNICATIONS:

From Mayor Jeffrey A. Lansky:

The Mayor's Court report for the month of March.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Fire Department – Chief John Drsek reported that the Fire Department responded to a house fire at 15833 Friend Street with estimate damages at \$30,000.00, and no insurance as the house is in foreclosure. Chief Drsek also thanked Chief Maracz for all his assistance throughout the years and commented that tonight's meeting would be the last one for Chief Maracz, as he is retiring in May.

Law Department - Mr. John Montello thanked Chief Maracz for his years of service and reported that the Mayor's court took in about \$50,000.00 last month in fines and parking tickets.

Police Department – Chief Richard Maracz reported that the Police Department responded to about 1,934 calls for service in the month of March and also, because of the financial situation in the City, he has asked Garfield Heights Municipal Court to begin charging for toxicology reports, and damages from accidents so that the City does not have to pay for them. Chief Maracz stated that the City received \$525.00 from an OVI arrest, \$839.00 from an accident, and also the second half of a DARE grant in the amount of \$7,272.00. Chief Maracz commented that he has had a long and interesting career, as he grew up and raised his family in Maple Heights. He stated that he enjoyed his career and all of the opportunities that Maple Heights has given him. Chief Maracz stated that he knows that Maple Heights is going through tough times, but there were tough times before and the City will survive if everyone just works together. Chief Maracz thanked everyone for the kind words.

Human Service Department – Mrs. Linda Vopat wished Chief Maracz a wonderful retirement and stated that it has been a pleasure working with him for all the years. Ms. Vopat also thanked the men and women in the Police Department for all of their help and cooperation with the Department of Human Services. Ms. Vopat announced that there are two ladies selling Easter candy for the Maple Heights Senior Site Center in the corner of the room and she appreciates everyone's support. Ms. Vopat reported that April is volunteer month and that the City will be honoring about 75 volunteers who have given 50 hours or more in 2013 on April 25th with an award program. Ms. Vopat thanked everyone involved with the successful Easter Festival held on April 12th including Southgate USA, Mr. Chicken, Walgreens, Maple Heights Library, Maple Heights Police and Fire Departments, First Federal of Lakewood, Dollar Bank, Home Depot, the Sparks Program, National Tax Exempt, H&R Block, Ferfolia Funeral Home, Shades Garage, John Montello, Alex and Patrice Adams, Jackie Albers, Toni Jones, Tanya Black and many other volunteers and donors of candy and raffle prizes. Ms. Vopat stated that the entire event was made possible by donations and thanked everyone for their support.

Finance Department: Finance Director Irene Crowell stated that she has completed two months on the job and she and her staff have been working diligently to get their arms around the finances to right the ship. Ms. Crowell stated that many residents are aware that the City has been declared to be in a "Fiscal Watch" which means that the City is trying to work with the State to get the debt under control. Ms. Crowell announced that there will be a Finance Committee meeting on Wednesday, April 23rd, and hopefully, there will be reports coming from that committee to the residents.

CITIZENS COMMENTS:

Mr. Bob Halen of 16223 Maplewood Court thanked Ms. Vopat for all the work that she does for the City, especially the Easter Festival, which was such a wonderful event. Mr. Halen also thanked Chief Maracz for his years of service to the City and wished him a happy retirement.

Ms. Georgette Vidmar of 18204 Maple Heights Blvd. announced that the Lion's Club would be sponsoring a Job Fair in partnership with the Equipoise Group and the Urban League of Greater Cleveland, on May 8th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant at 19000 Libby Road.

Mr. Al Glontz, Commander of the American Legion #309 of Maple Heights announced that because of the aging veterans, the parade route for the 77th Annual Memorial Day Parade has been shortened to begin at Maple Heights High School at 9:30 on May 26th, marching down Clement to Maple Heights Blvd, then to the Lee Road Memorial for services. Mr. Glontz asked all of the council members to notify their residents of the change. Mr. Glontz thanked Chief Maracz for his years of service to Maple Heights and wished him a wonderful retirement.

Mr. Trey Williams of 21400 Watson explained his mentoring program for 26 boys and the values that are taught through programs such as baseball and volunteering in the community.

Mr. Andrew Harant, Branch Manager of the Maple Heights Library thanked Council for their recognition in their resolution supporting the Library for National Library Week.

Karen Russell complained about City Services and the tax proposal on the May ballot.

Charlene Hayden of Gerard Avenue commented that the residents were not given enough time for the public hearing of the budget and stated that the residents should not have to pay more taxes for the City's mistakes.

Linda Greenfield of 5660 LaFayette Drive commented about the bad neighborhoods, the pot holes in the streets, the noise and the increase of taxes.

Mrs. Doris Hendrix of Gerard Avenue spoke about the neighborhoods.

LEGISLATION:

RESOLUTION NO.: 2014-30

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE FINANCE DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS WITH SPECIFICATIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR A TOWING SERVICE CONTRACT TO BE USED BY THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS FOR ALL NEEDED TOWING SERVICES AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

This Resolution had its second reading.

RESOLUTION NO.: 2014-31

AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE PASSAGE OF HOUSE BILL 267 AND SENATE BILL 180 BY THE OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH PROPOSES TO EXTEND THE ELIGIBILITY OF THE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION TO ELDERLY OR DISABLED HOMEOWNERS IN THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski to suspend the rules and place the Resolution on its third and final reading. ROLL CALL. Ayes: Agee, Adams, Jones, Jackson, and Trojanski. Nays: Cefaratti and Brownlee. As six affirmative votes are needed to suspend the rules, the Resolution remained on its first reading.

RESOLUTION NO.: 2014-32

A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING MAY 15, 2014 AS "MAPLE HEIGHTS POLICE APPRECIATION DAY" IN THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski to suspend the rules and place the Resolution on its third and final reading. ROLL CALL. Ayes: Agee, Adams, Jones, Cefaratti, Jackson, and Trojanski. Nay: Brownlee. Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski to adopt the Resolution. ROLL CALL. Ayes: Agee, Adams, Jones, Cefaratti, Jackson, and Trojanski. Nay: Brownlee. The motion passed. The Resolution passed by the vote of six ayes and 1 nay.

RESOLUTION NO.: 2014-33**A RESOLUTION SETTING THE REGULAR MEETINGS OF COUNCIL DURING THE MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski to suspend the rules and place the Resolution on its third and final reading. ROLL CALL. Ayes: Agee, Adams, Jones, Cefaratti, Jackson, and Trojanski. Nay: Brownlee. Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski to adopt the Resolution. ROLL CALL. Ayes: Agee, Adams, Jones, Cefaratti, Jackson, and Trojanski. Nay: Brownlee. The motion passed. The Resolution passed by the vote of six ayes and 1 nay.

RESOLUTION NO.: 2014-34**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO NEGOTIATE, EXECUTE AND DELIVER AN AGREEMENT WITH THE OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR DELINQUENT DEBT COLLECTIONS IN THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski to suspend the rules and place the Resolution on its third and final reading. ROLL CALL. Ayes: Agee, Adams, Jones, Cefaratti, Jackson, and Trojanski. Nay: Brownlee. Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Ms. Jones to adopt the Resolution. ROLL CALL. Ayes: Agee, Adams, Jones, Cefaratti, Jackson, and Trojanski. Nay: Brownlee. The motion passed. The Resolution passed by the vote of six ayes and 1 nay.

RESOLUTION NO.: 2014-35**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS TO ACCEPT THE TITLE TO TWO VACANT PARCELS OF LAND ON GREENWAY ROAD FOR THE LAND BANK IN THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

This Resolution had its first Reading.

ORDINANCE NO.: 2014-36**AN ORDINANCE REPEALING CHAPTER 1487 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES REGARDING CERTIFICATES OF RENTAL COMPLIANCE AND AMENDING CHAPTER 1486 REGARDING THE REGISTRATION OF RENTAL PROPERTIES IN THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

This Ordinance had its first Reading.

EXPENDITURES OVER \$1,000.00:

Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jackson to approve the expenditures over \$1,000.00 numbered 2014-50 through 2014-52. ROLL CALL. Ayes: Agee, Adams, Jones, Jackson, and Trojanski. Present: Brownlee and Cefaratti. The motion passed by the vote of five ayes and 2 Present.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Lansky was not in attendance.

COUNCIL'S REPORT:

Council as a whole wished everyone a Happy Easter.

Councilwoman Edwina Agee, District 7 stated that her report was for the Mayor but he is not present. To Ms. Russell, Ms. Agee stated that this is her first year on Council, so she shouldn't blame the new members for the things that happened in the past. Ms. Agee announced that on Monday, April 21, 2014 at the Maple Heights City Hall, Room 7, there will be a Community Life Committee Meeting at 6:00 p.m. with two items on the agenda: 1) to implement a scholarship for the Seniors at the Maple Heights Schools and 2) to develop a team building technique for all seven districts in the City. Ms. Agee also commented about a problem with Channel 5 to have District 7 showcased with their Block Watch Program after the Mayor stated that District 7 would be included with District 1 and District 6.

Councilman Alex Adams, District 1 reported that there was an attempted break-in on Lisa Drive, and he has received several complaints about the road conditions on Lisa and Summit Drives, and a complaint of suspected drug dealing on Woodbrook. Mr. Adams stated that with the help of Councilwoman Toni Jones, he contacted Huntington Bank, who owned a foreclosed home on Woodbrook, that had water in the basement, and the bank came out the next day and resolved the problem. Mr. Adams stated that he has also had a complaint about people who are feeding the deer on City property. Mr. Adams announced that the American Legion Post 309 would have their last fish fry on May 2nd. Mr. Adams thanked Chief Maracz for his years of service and also thanked Linda Vopat for her dedicated work on the Easter Festival. Mr. Adams also commented on the annual budget and stated that he voted to pass the budget in order to allow our employees to get paid, which we couldn't do unless we had the budget into the County by March 31st. He stated that it is basically a temporary budget to see if the income tax issue will pass in May. Mr. Adams added that the Finance Director has only been employed here for two months and the City gave the proper notice for the public hearing. Mr. Adams stated that there was no Finance Committee meeting scheduled because the facts from the Finance Director and that State had not been available to the committee.

Councilwoman Toni Jones, District 2 commented on the dedication and hard work that Chief Maracz has put in over his 30 year career and thanked him for keeping everyone safe. Ms. Jones stated that she understands that everyone is frustrated and concerned with the City's financial situation and she asked everyone to be patient and work together. Ms. Jones also reported that April is Fair Housing month, which was established in 1968 after the death of Martin Luther King, and that she hopes that everyone can clean up their property and their neighborhood. Ms. Jones invited everyone to come to the work sessions and committee meetings to learn how Council legislates and makes decisions, which affects the residents and the City. Ms. Jones stated that the Council needs everyone to come together to keep the City a good place to live.

Councilman Anthony Cefaratti, District 3 expressed his condolences to the family of the clerk who was shot at the Prime Station in his district. Mr. Cefaratti also congratulated Chief Maracz on his retirement and thanked Linda Vopat for her for putting together another successful Easter Festival.

Councilman Ron Jackson, District stated that he receives many calls for renter and landlord issues, pets, and noise complaints; and he will be sending a copy of the ordinances to the people involved.

Mr. Jackson reported that a sink hole on Thomas Street will be repaired by the County. Mr. Jackson thanked Trey Williams for his involvement with the youth of the City and stated that residents may contact him at mhboysleague@gmail.com for information or donations. Mr. Jackson urged everyone to get involved and to consider doing something good for the many organizations in the City by volunteering your time or donating money to help.

Councilman Bill Brownlee, District 5 encouraged everyone to attend the Memorial Day Parade on May 26. Mr. Brownlee also spoke about justice in the City and stated that he voted against supporting the Homestead Exemption for Seniors over 65 years old because he believes that it is not justice when a person receives a tax break just because they are over 65 years old making \$30,000.00 a year, because he makes over \$30,000.00 a year and does not receive the same tax break. Mr. Brownlee stated that the City needs to be just and fair with all aspects of the City, enforcement of laws, communications, and meeting rules.

Councilman Richard Trojanski District 6 congratulated Chief Maracz on his retirement and announced that he will have a Finance Meeting on Wednesday, April 23, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. and that it is a public meeting and everyone is welcomed to attend. In addition, Mr. Trojanski announced that he is having a community meeting at the Library on May 3rd and May 10th from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for the residents of District 6 to keep them informed on the state of the City and to answer any questions that they may have.

Council President Jackie Albers stated that there are several informational sheets on the back table regarding the income tax increase that will be on the ballot on May 6th. Ms. Albers stated that the Community Garden meeting was very successful with all plots being taken and a waiting list for several residents. Ms. Albers also mentioned more opportunities for summer jobs for youth through Y.O.U. (Youth Opportunities Unlimited) and that interested individuals ages 14 through 24 can learn more at www.youthopportunities.org. Ms. Albers also stressed the need for more Block Watch Programs in the City and urged everyone to get involved.

There being no further business to come before this Council, Council President Jackie Albers adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Passed: May 7, 2014

ATTEST:

Katherine M. Unger, CMC