

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

Maple Heights Senior Center

January 15, 2014

Council President Jackie Albers called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m. Councilman Alex Adams of District 1 gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Council Clerk 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 Mayor Jeffrey Lansky, Law Director John Montello, Chief Richard Maracz, Fire Chief John Drsek, Human Services Director Linda Vopat, and Clerk of Council Katherine Unger. Absent and excused was Engineer Ed Hren.

Ms. Albers announced that there were no addendums or minutes to approve.

COMMUNICATIONS:

From Bruce Stevenson, Ohio Department of Commerce

A notice from the Division of Liquor Control stating that the request for the renewal of the liquor license of Adam Cohen for Sub Pub, Inc. at 19807 Libby Road has been denied as requested by the City of Maple Heights.

From Mayor Jeffrey A. Lansky

The Mayor's Court report for the month of December, 2013.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski to temporarily adjourn the regular meeting and go into an executive session for the purpose of personnel, specifically, the hiring of a Finance Director. All voted aye, none opposed, the motion passed. Time was noted at 7:20 p.m.

At 8:10 p.m. Mr. Trojanski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cefaratti to resume the regular meeting of Council. All voted aye, none opposed, the motion passed.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Fire Department – Chief John Drsek reported that the Fire Department responded to a house fire on James Avenue, which sustained about \$40,000.00 in damages and also to commercial property on Industrial Avenue, where the damages were contained to the heating unit.

Law Department - Mr. John Montello had no report.

Police Department – Chief Richard Maracz reported that in December, the department received 1,782 calls for service, which increased the total year of service calls to 22,908 calls for 2013, an increase over 2012. In addition, Chief Maracz reminded the residents that when snow exceeds two inches, the emergency snow ban goes into effect and no parking is permitted on any street.

Engineering Department – Mr. Edward Hren was not present.

Human Service Department – Mrs. Linda Vopat reported that for the year 2013, the Senior Center provided 8,669 meals on site and delivered 16,939 meals for home bound seniors and disabled residents. In addition, Ms. Vopat reported that transportation for Senior Citizens and the disabled totaled 12,581 one-way trips, which equated to over 60,000 miles for senior transportation. Ms. Vopat reminded the residents that help with income tax returns for seniors over 60 years old, would be available beginning February 3, 2014 by the AARP and that a reservation would be needed.

CITIZENS COMMENTS:

Mr. Andrew Harris, Manager of the Maple Heights Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Libraries welcomed the new Council and explained the renovations that are being done at the site. Mr. Harris stated that the renovations should be completed by June of 2014, and that anyone can contact him for information.

Ms. Rosaline Moore of 5580 Sunny Lane commented that she believes that there is only one other city, Parma Heights, with a 3% income tax rate, and asked if the city has done anything to make other cuts before they ask the residents for more money.

Mr. Gerald Arnold of 20709 Bowling Green Avenue thanked the administration for the question and answer sheet regarding the proposed half percent income tax increase, but asked how long the 1.9 million that it would generate, would last in the budget. Mr. Arnold commented that he thought that a real estate tax may be a better idea.

Mr. Bob Halen of 16226 Maplewood Court commented about the income tax proposal and agreed with an income tax increase and not with a real estate tax increase.

Mr. Chuck Fennal of 15916 Walvern Avenue asked that the Council and the Mayor not shut down the baseball program or the parks in general. Mr. Fennal stated that he sees many elderly residents come on Sunday mornings to watch the games and he stated that there are many residents who play ball. Mr. Fennal stated that the baseball programs and the parks do a tremendous service to both the residents and non-residents and he hopes that they can be kept open.

LEGISLATION:

ORDINANCE NO.: 2014-01

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 890.03 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES INCREASING THE INCOME TAX RATE TO THREE PERCENT (3%) IN THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

This Ordinance had its first reading.

ORDINANCE NO.: 2014-02

AN ORDINANCE DIRECTING THE CLERK OF COUNCIL TO CERTIFY TO THE CUYAHOGA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE VII OF THE MAPLE HEIGHTS CHARTER TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE ELECTORS AT THE MAY 6, 2014 PRIMARY ELECTION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

This Ordinance had its first reading.

ORDINANCE NO.: 2014-03

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 1494.09 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES REGARDING THE ESCROW ACCOUNTS REQUIRED ENSURING THAT ALL VIOLATIONS ARE REPAIRED UPON A SALE OR TRANSFER OF REAL ESTATE IN THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

This Ordinance had its first reading.

ORDINANCE NO.: 2014-04

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 648.19 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES REGARDING THE ABATEMENT OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY NUISANCES SUBJECTING THE OWNER OF THE PROPERTY TO THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 698.02 IN THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

This Ordinance had its first reading.

RESOLUTION NO.: 2014-05

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER NUMBER 1 FOR THE KARVO PAVING COMPANY DECREASING THE CONTRACT BY \$44,744.90 FOR THE CLOSEOUT OF FINAL PAY ESTIMATE OF THE 2012 CDBG INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 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. All voted aye, none opposed, the motion passed. Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski to adopt the legislation. All voted aye, none opposed, the motion passed. The Resolution passed by the vote of 7 ayes, and 0 nays.

RESOLUTION NO.: 2014-06

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT AGREEMENT WITH THYSSEN KRUPP FOR A FIVE YEAR MAINTENANCE SERVICE CONTRACT FOR THE CITY'S ELEVATOR AT THE SENIOR CENTER IN THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

This Resolution had its first reading.

RESOLUTION NO.: 2014-07

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CLERK OF COUNCIL TO ATTEND PUBLIC RECORDS TRAINING AS REQUIRED IN THE OHIO REVISED CODE, AS THE DESIGNEE FOR ANY COUNCIL MEMBER WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED SAID TRAINING 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. All voted aye, none opposed, the motion passed. Mr. Adams made a motion,

seconded by Mr. Trojanski to adopt the legislation. All voted aye, none opposed, the motion passed. The Resolution passed by the vote of 7 ayes, and 0 nays.

RESOLUTION NO.: 2014-08

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM OF TAX AMNESTY WITH THE REGIONAL INCOME TAX AUTHORITY (RITA) WITH REGARDS TO PAYMENT OF DELINQUENT MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX TO 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: Adams, Jones, Cefaratti, Jackson Trojanski and Agee. Nay: Brownlee. Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski to adopt the legislation. All voted aye, none opposed, the motion passed. The Resolution passed by the vote of 7 ayes, and 0 nays.

EXPENDITURES OVER \$1,000.00:

Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Ms. Jones to approve the expenditures over \$1,000.00 numbered 2014-01 and 2014-02. All voted aye, none opposed, the motion passed.

FINANCE DIRECTOR APPOINTMENT:

Council President Jackie Albers asked the Council for a motion to appoint the new Finance Director. Mr. Jackson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski to appoint Ms. Irene Crowell as the new Finance Director in the City of Maple Heights.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO-TEM:

Council President Jackie Albers asked for nominations for the position of Council President Pro-Tem, who would take her place if she was out of town or no longer President.

Councilman Anthony Cefaratti of District 3 nominated Councilwoman Toni Jones from District 2 for Council President Pro-Tem.

Councilman Alex Adams of District 1 nominated Councilman Richard Trojanski of District 6 for Council President Pro-Tem.

Council President Jackie Albers closed the nominations and asked the Clerk to call the roll for Richard Trojanski to become the Council Pro-Tem.

ROLL CALL for Richard Trojanski: Adams/YES, Jones/NO, Cefaratti/NO, Jackson/YES, Brownlee/NO, Trojanski/YES, Agee/YES.

Council President Jackie Albers asked the Clerk to call the roll for Toni Jones to become the Council Pro-Tem.

ROLL CALL for Toni Jones: Adams/NO, Jones/YES, Cefaratti/YES, Jackson/YES, Brownlee/YES, Trojanski/NO, Agee/YES.

As Mr. Trojanski won the first vote, and Ms. Jones won the second vote, it was suggested that the Council President break the tie. The Council President questioned that two members voted YES for both

candidates. Council President Albers stated that previously, the Pro-Tem was the Senior member, therefore, she cast her vote for Toni Jones, who has more years as a member of Council than Mr. Trojanski.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Lansky stated that he wanted to clarify the comments made regarding the perception that the City does not communicate with the residents. Mayor Lansky stated that at one time, the City's news was spread with two local newspapers, but now there are none. In addition, the Plain Dealer has become digitalized and very few people have the newspaper delivered. Mayor Lansky stated that last November, he predicted that a property tax would not pass because of the 33% devaluation of the homes in Maple Heights by Cuyahoga County. The Mayor stated that the 33% loss on property values amounted to about 1.5 million dollars of lost revenue for the City, and in addition, the State of Ohio had cut over a million dollars in taxes from the City the year before. He added that the City did not and will not get any casino money, as the County Executive wants it to remain in downtown Cleveland. Mayor Lansky also commented that the City lost over \$178,000.00 a year from the loss of the Internet Cafes being taken away by the State because of the new Casinos coming in. Mayor Lansky stated that the City has laid-off over 40 people in the last three years and did not replace the employees who retired. Mayor Lansky also explained that last November, 79 of every eligible 100 voters stayed home and did not vote. He continued and stated that the 21% voter turn-out was the lowest turn-out in an election in the last 40 years in Cuyahoga County and surely the lowest voter turnout in Maple Heights' history. Mayor Lansky stated that he believes that the low voter turnout last year happened because of poverty, despair, a disappearing middle class, and a growing cynicism that their vote does not matter. Mayor Lansky continued by explaining the epidemic of the poor and uneducated and the lack of civic minded candidates who run for positions on the local, county, state, and federal level. Mayor Lansky ended his report by stating that this proposed half percent increase in income tax will generate 1.9 million dollars, but the city will only receive 25% of that during this year. He stated that the tax will affect 90% of the people who work here, but not live here, and it will not affect Senior Citizens at all.

COUNCIL'S REPORT:

Councilman Alex Adams, District 1 welcomed Irene Crowell as the new Finance Director. Mr. Adams reported on several complaints that were referred to the Police Department including cars that were left out on the street on Janice, Lisa, and Mendota, in addition to a resident on Mendota complaining about loud noise coming from a neighbor's house after midnight. Mr. Adams also added that the "One Stop" gas station on Turney and Dunham was robbed, which is still under investigation. Mr. Adams thanked the Police for their quick responses and all of the work they do. Mr. Adams also reported on several issues concerning the freezing weather including dogs left outside during the sub zero temperatures, the South Lee apartments that were without water for 5 days, six lights not working at the Turney-Dunham Plaza, and pot hole repairs on Turney Road. Mr. Adams invited everyone to come to American Legion Post 309 service for the four Chaplains at the Lutheran's Church, 19000 Libby Road at 9:00 a.m., with breakfast afterwards at the Post.

Councilwoman Toni Jones, District 2 reported on a house fire on James Avenue and thanked the Fire Department for their efficiency and hard work putting out the fire. In addition, Ms. Jones reported that some residents in the Maplewood Apartments were also without water when some pipes burst in an apartment that had the controlling water meter of three other apartments. Ms. Jones stated that she has a goal this year of obtaining separate meters for these apartments. Ms. Jones thanked everyone who voted for her and congratulated Ms. Crowell in her new position as Finance Director.

Councilman Anthony Cefaratti, District 3 had no report.

Councilman Ron Jackson, District 4 stated that he had his first call as a new Councilman and the resident asked if the snow plows could stop plowing snow into his apron. Regarding the tax issued, Mr. Jackson stated that it will probably take multiple things to get the budget balanced and he believes in addition to balancing the budget, he feels that the City should try to get a little more, because the trend is not going up, and we probably will need more money next year. Mr. Jackson also welcomed Ms. Crowell as Finance Director and read a letter to the audience, which stated in part that there will be hard decisions to make, and he will not make them based on feelings or friendship, but on the best verifiable information available.

Councilman Bill Brownlee, District 5 also welcomed Ms. Crowell as the new Finance Director. Mr. Brownlee stated that he had the first prayer meeting for the City and he is pleased that he is going before the one who can do the most for the City. Mr. Brownlee then told a story of how Twinsburg got out of debt when the Chrysler Plant shut down and East Cleveland who had various money problems and where the Mayor and Council did not get along.

Councilman Richard Trojanski District 6 welcomed Ms. Crowell as Finance Director and thanked the Council for voting for the Tax Amnesty Program, which will run for 90 days and hopefully bring in some of the \$2 million dollars that is owed to the City without the resident being required to pay penalties and interest. Mr. Trojanski also spoke about a new program regarding Civic Engagement in his district that will be addressing several issues of the residents in February and March.

Councilwoman Edwina Agee, District 7 announced that she will have a Block Watch meeting on February 26th for her district in the Maple Heights Library from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Council President Jackie Albers announced that the Northeast Ohio City Council Association, which the Council are members of and invited to attend, will be hosting a meeting on January 22nd at the Embassy Suites on Rockside with Doctor Akram Boutros, MD, Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, and President and Chief Executive Officer of Metro General Hospital as the key note speaker. Ms. Albers also announced that there will be a Special Meeting of Council on Wednesday, January 22, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. at the Maple Heights Senior Center, to further discuss and possibly pass some of the legislation not passed at this meeting. Ms. Albers also invited the residents who spoke this evening to work on the tax levy for its passage at the May 6, 2014 primary election.

There being no further business to come before this Council, Council President Jackie Albers adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Passed: February 19, 2014

ATTEST:

Katherine M. Unger, CMC