

**CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS
WORK SESSION OF COUNCIL
AUGUST 31, 2015**

Council President Jackie Albers called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. at Maple Heights City Hall in Room 7. Those present were Council President Jackie Albers, Council members Alex Adams, Toni Jones, Ron Jackson, Bill Brownlee, Richard Trojanski, and Edwina Agee. Councilman Anthony Cefaratti was absent and excused.

Also present were Law Director John Montello, Police Chief John Popielarczyk, Finance Director Irene Crowell, Human Services Director Linda Vopat, Union Steward Shawn McKiven and Council Clerk Leonette Cicirella.

Council President Albers stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss various items of current and future legislation and to receive an update regarding the financial status of the Human Services Department. Regarding **Ordinance No. 2015-36**, Ms. Albers asked if there were any other questions or comments since it is on third reading. There being none, Ms. Albers said it will be ready to vote.

Moving on to **Ordinance 2015-55**, Ms. Albers asked Police Chief Popielarczyk to discuss the contract with the City of Warrensville Heights regarding prisoner housing. The Chief stated that the contract is needed for two (2) reasons – the first is that the Warrensville Heights jail is undergoing renovations and secondly, because city jails need reciprocal arrangements to house prisoners under the State mandated “12 Day Rule.” The Chief further explained that this rule requires prisoners to be transferred to another jail facility after twelve (12) days. Councilman Jackson said the proposed contract should have more specific terms citing as an example prisoners with health issues requiring medications. Chief Popielarczyk said that is already covered by present policies and booking procedures. Mr. Jackson questioned the sufficiency of the Thirty-five Dollars (\$35.00) hourly rate of reimbursement to the City if a prisoner went to the hospital. The Chief said auxiliary officers would be used for this duty so the fee would be sufficient to cover these costs. In addition, the Chief stated the contract requires Warrensville Heights to make arrangements to stay with the prisoner.

Ms. Albers presented **Resolutions 2015-56 and 2015-57** together regarding the labor union contracts between the City and the Service Department employees. Ms. Albers asked Law Director Montello to explain the summary of changes in the contracts and noted that the union members had voted to accept the contracts so Council should as well. Mr. Montello said the Unions understand the situation the City is in and have made concessions in terms regarding layoffs and recalls; changed vacation schedules; no raises; changes in uniform allowances; longevity; and increased insurance contributions. Mr. Jackson asked about the cost-savings of the contracts and Mr. Montello said he didn’t have an exact dollar amount. Ms. Albers said the anticipated cost savings were not just a dollar amount, but also savings in the future. Councilman Adams noted that the Unions have made a number of concessions over the past few years.

Ms. Albers asked if the contracts included language regarding part-time workers. Union Steward Shawn McKiven said this was the first contract to include part-time workers; the provision requires a limit on the number of such part-time hires which can never exceed the number of full-time employees. Mr. Adams asked about the longevity provisions and Mr. Montello said that for new hires there will not be longevity benefits. Mr. Adams said that if current employees on layoff were called back, they should not be considered “new hires” which should be defined in the contracts.

Resolutions 2015-37 to 2015-42 inclusive, list the various assessments to be filed with the county. Finance Director Crowell started the discussion with **Resolution 2015-42** and the calculation required by ordinance to set the trash collection fees. Referring back to the Waste Management contract and a review of the number of parcels within the City, Ms. Crowell said the fee works out to \$11.79 per month per residence. Ms. Crowell stated that Council may need to revise the legislation however, since there is a fallacy in the calculation. She said the calculation is a “break-even calculation” but does not include other charges for rubbish pick-up such as city service personnel and use of city trucks, delinquencies which are running about 5% and coverage of the balance of the Homestead Exemption. Mr. Jackson asked how the Homestead Exemption is handled and Ms. Crowell said that since the Homestead Exemption parcels pay only one-half (1/2) of the pro rata fee, the City has to pay the other half. Ms. Crowell also stated that since the funds from the assessments come in twice a year from the property taxes, the General Fund must subsidize the Waste Management contract until these tax dollars are received by the City. She said the fund is then reimbursed when the City receives these settlements from the County. Ms. Albers asked about the delinquent accounts and Ms. Crowell said since the fees are assessed on the property taxes the City cannot take collection action on its own.

Councilwoman Jones asked if the Waste Management contract has any adjustment for vacant and/or abandoned properties. Ms. Crowell said that in meetings with the Waste Management representative the company challenged the number of vacant homes and told her the company did not have a counter system to determine where trash was picked-up.

Councilman Brownlee asked if Council would be reducing the fees. Ms. Albers said Council should consider keeping the fees listed in the resolution since the contract is up for review next year and the new contract could perhaps be able to include recycling. Ms. Jones said the fee should stay the same to cover the Homestead Exemption balance, the delinquencies and the overhead, which may still keep the City at a loss.

Regarding **Resolutions 2015-37, 2015-38, 2015-40 and 2015-41** Ms. Crowell said these were combined since these assessments come from the Service Department to cover the boarding up of houses, building code violations, demolitions and the grass cutting. These costs are assessed if the homeowners do not pay the invoiced charges. Ms. Jones asked Chief Popielarczyk about **Resolution 2015-39** regarding the assessments for criminal nuisances. The Chief said the Police Department prepares the paperwork and sends to the homeowners who either pay the invoice or meet with the Chief to discuss the situation. If the land owner fails to pay or comply after their meeting, the billing goes to the Finance Department to be assessed. The Chief said that the

purpose of the criminal nuisance assessment was not so much to raise revenue for the City, but to get the land owner to address the bad behavior.

Mr. Jackson said the percentage of collections for the grass charges looked low. Ms. Crowell said the City is recouping the money paid to the landscapers for the grass cutting based upon what is charged.

With regards to **Resolution 2015-60**, the tax rates from the County Budget Commission, Ms. Crowell said the rates are basically the same and have been for the past three (3) years.

Also discussed was an update of the financial status of the Maple Heights Senior Center. Ms. Crowell said the Center had originally been funded to August, 2015 but after a review of the expenditures and revenues received, there will be enough money to fund it to December, 2015. Ms. Crowell said Human Services Director Vopat should be commended for working hard to keep the Center's expenses down from Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) a month to about Twenty-four Thousand Dollars (\$24,000.00) for the last month and for all the fundraising which totaled approximately Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000.00). Ms. Crowell said there is an additional projected donation of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) from the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association.

Human Services Director Vopat said the Center should know about the donation from the First Catholic association by the first week of October. Mrs. Vopat said the County Grant received from the County Senior Services agency will be in the amount of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) and will be given in advance rather than as a reimbursement grant.

Mr. Jackson commended Mrs. Vopat, her staff and everyone who worked so diligently on the fundraising. Mrs. Vopat said the department is working hard to keep the services intact for the residents and that if the department would lose the area on aging grant and other grants, the City wouldn't get them back. Similarly, Mrs. Vopat said if the City would lose the Human Services Department, it would lose the recreation center and other extra activities for the community for which the department is the foundation.

Ms. Albers asked Mrs. Vopat for an update regarding the Food pantry. Mrs. Vopat said that since the need in Maple Heights is greater than what the Center and churches in the area can serve, Mrs. Vopat and area pastors have met with the Cleveland Food Bank to assist them. Mrs. Vopat said there will be another meeting with the Food Bank to discuss this situation. She said Southgate has donated space on Southgate Park Boulevard for a year-round Farmer's market with food supplied by the Cleveland Food Bank. Ms. Albers asked how soon the meeting will be held to which Mrs. Vopat replied the end of September or early October so the market can be set before the bad weather.

Mrs. Vopat also announced that the Senior Center was selected for a pilot program sponsored by a non-profit organization, Rebuilding Together, Northeast Ohio, which will be providing an in-home modification program to assist the elderly, disabled, low-income and vets in need of safety modifications such as grab bars, hand rails, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Mrs. Vopat said the organization will select twenty-five (25) households and the applications will be

available at the Senior Center. Ms. Albers said this was another example of how much the Department does for the community besides food for the seniors and the City needs to be made aware of this fact. Mrs. Vopat said that in the past there had been discussions about changing the name from Senior Center to Maple Heights Community Center.

Mr. Jackson said he would give Mrs. Vopat contact information for retired sheet metal workers and union carpenters who may be able to help on the project. Ms. Jones asked how the City was selected for the pilot program. Mrs. Vopat said it was based on the area demographics; the City had populations in each of the categories the organization wanted to help. Mrs. Vopat said this was a good example of looking beyond the numbers, and looking for opportunities and partnerships to get programs for the City.

Ms. Albers said that although Fire Chief Kavaliunas did not attend the meeting, he did report that the Fire Department has hired three (3) new firemen and all of the applicants under the SAFER Grant have been interviewed and are undergoing background checks.

Ms. Albers asked if there were any other questions or concerns. Ms. Jones said it is important to consider a name change for the Senior Center to encompass what was done in the past and what programs are available from the Department now. She said that may encourage more people to take advantage of the Center. Mr. Jackson agreed and asked Mrs. Vopat if she had any suggestions. Mrs. Vopat said some suggestions in the past were Maple Heights Senior and Family Services, Maple Heights Community Center, Maple Heights Community Life.

Councilwoman Agee asked if **Resolution 2015-58** regarding the Proclamation Honoring Congressman Louis Stokes would be introduced by all the council members to which Ms. Albers answered in the affirmative.

The Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

S/S Leonette F. Cicirella, Clerk of Council