

**CITY OF MASON
COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 24, 2014**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. Chaplain Jerry Pelfrey opened the meeting in prayer. All those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Madison Kilgore sang the National Anthem.

ATTENDANCE

The following members of Council were present: Victor Kidd, Barbara Spaeth, Rich Cox, Tom Grossmann, Charlene Pelfrey, Don Prince, and David Nichols.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the November 10, 2014 Council Meeting Minutes was made by Councilmember Pelfrey, seconded by Councilmember Spaeth. VOTE: 5 YEAS, 2 ABSTAIN (Cox, Nichols).

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

A motion to appoint Jennifer Heft as acting City Manager during Eric Hansen's absence was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Grossmann. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to cancel the December 8 and December 22 Council Meetings and schedule a meeting on December 15 was made by Councilmember Grossmann, seconded by Vice Mayor Kidd. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

City offices will be closed on Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28 in observance of Thanksgiving. The Community Center will be open for limited hours on Thanksgiving Day. The Center will resume normal operating hours on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Shop Local Event will be held at the Community Center on Wednesday, December 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This event, located along Main Street at the Center, will feature 30 area merchants and home sales representatives. This is a great opportunity to start your holiday shopping.

Wednesday, December 3, the Community Center will host the 6th annual Mocktails event from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Participants will be competing for the Best Drink Name, Best Taste, and Best Display. Come cast your vote!

Christmas in Mason will take place in downtown Mason on Friday, December 5 from 6 to 9 p.m. It will feature horse-drawn carriage rides, ice and woodcarvings, photos with Santa, food vendors, and great entertainment on the main stage. The Christmas tree lighting ceremony will take place on the downtown plaza. Also look for Bicentennial merchandise on sale at 212 West Main Street.

For the 18th year, the City will conduct its Hope for the Holidays program. Again this year, City employees will partner with the Mason Food Pantry. There are many ways to help someone in need this holiday season by donating non-perishable food items directly to the Food Pantry, adopting a family, and donating new unwrapped toys or gift certificates. Gift donations are being accepted and may be left in collection barrels located at the Municipal Center and Community Center.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilmember Spaeth reported on the many activities and events happening at the Community Center, parks, and in the City. She said that Mason Youth Basketball league has 139 teams with over 1400 participants, baseball field scheduling begins in December, and two Manta Rays swimmers have signed college letters of intent. Over the past ten years, Manta Rays swimmers have received \$1 million in college scholarships.

Councilmember Grossmann stated that the Finance Committee met several times last week to work on the 2015 Budget that will be presented for approval tonight.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS - none

ORDINANCE 2014-112 ACCEPTING THE PROPOSAL FOR THE DESIGN OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER NORTH ENTRANCE AND LOCKER ROOM RENOVATION

A motion to read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Pelfrey. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

Jennifer Heft discussed Ordinance 2014-112 and Ordinance 2014-113 together. She stated that Mason Community Center remains a unique facility built through partnerships with Mason City Schools and TriHealth. Today, some of the original portions of the Community Center are over twelve years old. Next year the City will celebrate the fifth anniversary partnership for the 2010 expansion to the Center. She explained that the approximately 150,000 square foot facility remains one of the largest public recreation facilities in the state and is home to TriHealth and Assurex. The Center is truly a community asset adding to the quality of life for residents and businesses. To retain, increase members, and continue as a driving economic development recruitment force, the Center must remain competitive with programs, facilities and amenities that offer something for everyone in the community. Jennifer stated that the Request for Proposal (RFP) for architectural services addresses three key components: the north entrance, locker rooms/studio space, and master plan. She explained that due to the constant volume of customers through the north entrance, the two sets of doors at the main entrance do not function as designed. Both doors remain open when one should close prior to the second door opening making it difficult to control the temperature at the entrance and along Main Street. Staff has tried a number of options but ultimately architectural services are needed to provide viable alternatives for a more permanent and successful outcome. Once a viable alternative is selected, legislation would be needed for construction, which if initiated in the summer could be complete before the fall and winter of next year. Jennifer explained that the original design of Community

Center locker rooms matched those for use of high school students in size, materials and amenities. A cosmetic makeover with new wall tile was done in 2010, but did not change the layout or amenities. The locker rooms are the number one complaint received from members at the Center. She stated that staff has done some preliminary designs to investigate feasibility and overall scope of the project. The preliminary design included the potential for a second floor above the locker rooms that could be used for offices or additional programming space. Design would likely not be completed until 2015 with construction anticipated in 2016. Jennifer stated that the success of studio-oriented programs and classes offered at the Community Center demonstrate the need for additional studio space. Additional studio space would expand programming, increase Center revenues and retain/increase memberships. She explained that one concept explored is the enclosure of the west canopy (original entrance to the Community Center) currently used for outdoor fitness and programming. By using existing studio sizes as a template, the 2,300 square feet of open canopy could be enclosed to provide two studios. A portion of the current area would remain to provide continued outdoor fitness and programming opportunities. Jennifer explained that in 2009, the City contracted with Ballard*King for the 2010 Community Center expansion. As part of the master planning, Ballard*King compiled inventory and assessment of existing recreational programs, services, and facilities and then provided a comparative analysis to communities of similar size and density within the region, using nationally accepted standards. She stated that when the City sent RFPs to six architectural firms, three firms responded and were interviewed. Two of the firms had Ballard*King listed on their team. All proposals reflect the directive in the RFP for the Community Center to remain open during the construction process. Jennifer stated that it is critical that preparation of the master plan start as soon as possible so that design of locker rooms and studio space accommodate and incorporate recommendations of the master plan. The Community Center Committee has reviewed these services and recommends Ordinance 2014-112 and Ordinance 2014-113 for adoption.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Councilmember Pelfrey, seconded by Councilmember Spaeth. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-112 was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

ORDINANCE 2014-113 ACCEPTING THE PROPOSAL FOR THE DESIGN OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER MASTER PLAN

A motion to read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Councilmember Prince, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-113 was made by Councilmember Spaeth, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

ORDINANCE 2014-114 ANNUAL APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE

A motion to read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Pelfrey. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

Jennifer Heft stated that the Finance Committee met to review 2015 Budget proposals and make recommendations for the annual appropriation ordinance. Prior to Finance Committee meetings, the Equipment Committee met to review requests for equipment and vehicle needs; Employee Relations met to review compensation and benefits; and the Golf Course Committee met to review the budget submitted by Recreation Management Services (RMS). Jennifer stated that there are currently 22 vacant positions within the City and a few additional positions are anticipated prior to the end of the year. No new positions were requested as part of the 2015 Budget. She explained that the City continues to strategically evaluate vacant positions across organizational lines to determine the best allocation of resources to benefit City operations. The 2015 Budget includes \$13.1 million for capital projects and \$1.8 million for vehicles which includes the purchase of four police cruisers and one fire vehicle. She explained that the City will continue the strategy to not schedule individual vehicles for replacement, but to rely on contingency amounts to more closely align vehicle failure with replacement. The 2015 Budget includes almost \$1 million in contingency funds for equipment. Jennifer listed major capital improvements included in the budget: Kings Island Drive Safety Improvements at \$5.2 million; Street Maintenance and Repair Program at \$1.3 million; Sewer Plant SCADA Phase II at \$1 million; SR 741/Stone Ridge Intersection Improvement at \$780,000; Tylersville/US-42 Sewer Overflow Reduction at \$720,000; SR-741/Parkside Intersection Improvements at \$600,000; Storm Water Improvements at \$450,000; Community Center Improvements and Replacements at \$365,000; Snider Road Widening Design at \$300,000; and Golf Course Improvements and Replacements at \$50,000. Jennifer stated that the budget continues to be based on conservative practices, which have helped the City with long-term financial health, even during economic downturns. A lot of hard work by all departments and employees has gone into controlling expenses. There continues to be concerns that in some cases, such as snow and ice removal, budget amounts will not be adequate for expected service levels. Staff will continue to monitor and additional follow-up with Council will likely be necessary throughout 2015. Jennifer stated that from a revenue standpoint, some of the City's strategies include: income tax revenues budgeted at less than 2013 actual receipts; no receipt of local government funds from the State are budgeted; and anticipated revenues from local job growth are not included. General Fund personnel and operating expenses have increased slightly at 3% after excluding one-time set-aside amounts. General Fund transfers include \$2.5 million for the Safety Fund's portion of the income tax. The 2015 Budget anticipates the need to reinvest in the Community Center to maintain success. With the decline and ultimately the potential elimination of state supported revenue, the 2015 Budget includes nothing for state supported revenue, which is consistent with last year. Total 2015 annual appropriations reflect a 3% increase over the 2014 Budget. The City's total outstanding debt is anticipated to fall by \$3 million and unencumbered General Fund operating balances to grow by \$5 million. Jennifer expressed her confidence that the 2015 Budget represents a fiscally prudent approach to municipal finances and a workforce committed to cost savings, efficiency, and sound investment in growing businesses. The Finance Committee recommends Ordinance 2014 - 114 for adoption.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Councilmember Prince, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

Council discussed types of vehicles being considered to replace Crown Victoria police cruisers.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-114 was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

ORDINANCE 2014-115 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT IN AN AMOUNT NOT-TO-EXCEED \$8000 TO THE WARREN COUNTY HUMANE ASSOCIATION, A PRIVATE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

A motion to read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

Jennifer Heft discussed Ordinance 2014-115 and Ordinance 2014-116 together. She stated that in 2006, the Finance Committee developed and Council approved a policy to guide contributions to local non-profit organizations. The policy recommends limiting City contributions to \$8,000 and no more than a third of a group's budget. The Finance Committee reviews this policy annually as part of the budget process and this year requested organizations submit a copy of their annual budget as part of the request to participate in the matching program. The program directs the City to contribute one dollar for every two dollars raised by the non-profit group with a maximum contribution of \$8,000. Jennifer stated that the Warren County Humane Association has participated in the matching program since 2010. This organization has submitted a copy of their budget and is requesting funding at the \$8000 level. Jennifer stated the City has partnered with Mason Historical Society since 1993. This organization has submitted a copy of their budget and is requesting funding at the \$8000 level. The Finance Committee reviewed both requests and is recommending Ordinance 2014 – 115 and Ordinance 2014 – 116 for adoption.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Councilmember Prince, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-115 was made by Councilmember Pelfrey, seconded by Councilmember Spaeth. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

ORDINANCE 2014-116 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT IN AN AMOUNT NOT-TO-EXCEED \$8000 TO THE MASON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, A PRIVATE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

A motion to read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Councilmember Pelfrey, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-116 was made by Councilmember Prince, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: 6 YEAS, 1 ABSTAIN (Cox).

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Grossmann explained his investigation into how Festivals of Mason (FOM) spent \$20,000 of City authorized funds to promote the Bicentennial. He stated that the FOM treasurer identified each check issued for bicentennial related items such as banners, balloons, advertising, and brochures. He found that FOM spent the \$20,000 on legitimate expenses. Councilmember Grossmann explained that with changes in their by-laws, FOM has become an organization independent of the City with the ability to raise money to support festivals and encourages residents to volunteer. He regrets any division in Council this topic has created, and expressed his desire that Councilmembers work together and appreciate each member for their individual strengths.

Mayor Nichols expressed his appreciation of the great team of both City staff and Council.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS - none

EXECUTIVE SESSION: LAND ACQUISITION AND PERSONNEL

A motion to adjourn into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing land acquisition and personnel was made by Councilmember Spaeth, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS. TIME: 7:57 p.m.

A motion to reconvene into Regular Session was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS. TIME: 8:23 p.m.

A motion to add Ordinance 2014-117, Ordinance 2014-118, Ordinance 2014-119, Ordinance 2014-120, and Ordinance 2014-121 to the agenda was made by Councilmember Prince, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS. .

ORDINANCE 2014-117 AMENDING ORDINANCE 2014-13 ESTABLISHING THE POSITIONS AND RATES OF COMPENSATION FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE MASON MUNICIPAL COURT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

A motion to read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Pelfrey. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-117 was made by Councilmember Cox, seconded by Vice Mayor Kidd. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

ORDINANCE 2014-118 ESTABLISHING THE SALARY ADMINISTRATION PLAN, PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF INCREASES IN COMPENSATION ON AN ANNUAL BASIS, AND GRANTING A COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE

A motion to read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-118 was made by Councilmember Pelfrey, seconded by Councilmember Spaeth. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

ORDINANCE 2014-119 REPEALING ORDINANCE 2013-97 OF THE CITY OF MASON, OHIO, AND ESTABLISHING HIRING COMPENSATION RANGES FOR CITY OF MASON EMPLOYMENT POSITIONS

A motion to read by title only was made by Councilmember Cox, seconded by Councilmember Pelfrey. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Councilmember Prince, seconded by Councilmember Spaeth. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-119 was made by Councilmember Cox, seconded by Councilmember Spaeth. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

ORDINANCE 2014-120 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT WITH BRIARLAKE LIMITED II RELATED TO APPROXIMATELY 7.9 ACRES OF REAL PROPERTY

A motion to read by title only was made by Councilmember Cox, seconded by Vice Mayor Kidd. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Councilmember Prince, seconded by Vice Mayor Kidd. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-120 was made by Councilmember Cox, seconded by Vice Mayor Kidd. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

ORDINANCE 2014-121 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT FOR GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT SERVICES WITH RECREATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES, INC.

A motion to read by title only was made by Councilmember Pelfrey, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Councilmember Prince, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

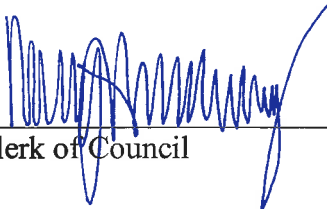
A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-121 was made by Councilmember Grossmann, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to authorize a one-time \$2500 bonus to acting City Manager Jennifer Heft for extra services performed during the City Manager's absence was made by Councilmember Pelfrey, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

Council discussed the schedule for finding Councilmember Grossmann's replacement. Jennifer Heft stated that a press release has been drafted to be sent out December 1st with a submission deadline of January 1, 2015.

ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS. TIME: 8:32 p.m.



Clerk of Council



Mayor