



**REGULAR PIQUA CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

Piqua City Commission met at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Government Complex Commission Chambers located at 201 W. Water Street, Piqua, Ohio

ROLL CALL

Mayor Pearson and Commissioners Hinds, Lee, and Vetter was present.

ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION at 5:31 pm

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinds to adjourn to Executive Session and seconded by Commissioner Lee. All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Pearson and Commissioners Hinds, Lee, and Vetter was present.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Session is to consider pending or imminent litigation.

ADJOURNMENT FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION at 6 pm

JOINT MEETING WITH WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES & PIQUA CITY COMMISSION

ROLL CALL OF PIQUA CITY COMMISSION AND WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES

Mayor Pearson and Commissioners Hinds, Lee, and Vetter was present. Scott Black and Jeff Lange were present to represent the Washington Township Trustees.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from the July 18, 2023, Joint Meeting of the Washington Township Trustees and the Piqua City Commission

RESOLUTION NO. R-117-23

A resolution appointing a member to the Board of Trustees of Forest Hill Union Cemetery

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinds to approve the Consent Agenda and Commissioner Vetter seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

Mayor Pearson introduced Sharon Watson as the new Forest Hill Union Cemetery Board member and gave Ms. Watson's background.

ADJOURNMENT FROM JOINT MEETING WITH WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES

A motion was made by Commissioner Lee to adjourn from the Joint Meeting and Commissioner Vetter seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

REGULAR PIQUA CITY COMMISSION MEETING

PRESENTATIONS

Jennifer Knisley, Program Director of Child Advocacy Center, gave an update on the center, including statistics. Ms. Knisley said that she has given training to the Piqua Police Department, met with camp counselors, and with the Rotary. Ms. Knisley said everyone has been supportive. Commissioners Hinds thanked her for the center and said that she sees how mental health is needed during her employment at the high school. Commissioner Lee said it is awesome to have this center and Commissioner Lee said he would have thought the numbers would have been a bit higher, and she said the numbers are just from March of this year.

Kathy Sherman said that she would like to make some positive announcements. She listed numerous stores that were new in Piqua, businesses that had complete renovations, and businesses that made improvements. These investments were the result of the small business grant. Ms. Sherman then asked Wilson Risner, owner and CEO of Winans, to come up and speak on the investment Winans has made in Piqua. Mr. Risner said Winans purchased a 30,000 square foot building downtown and grew out of it in 7 years. Since then, they have purchased two more buildings downtown. Mr. Risner said there is still work to be done but they have made a lot of progress. Commissioner Hinds said what they have done is exciting and she loves the new logo.

Mayor Pearson announced that the City of Piqua hired Jerry O'Brien as our new Finance Director. Paul Oberdorfer read his accomplishments and each commissioner welcomed Mr. O'Brien.

Paul Oberdorfer read a statement in response to the citizens' concerns regarding a business that was testing lithium batteries. Mr. Oberdorfer also stated that the city is working with the regulatory agencies.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from the October 3, 2023, Regular City Commission meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinds to approve the Consent Agenda and Commissioner Lee seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

Mayor Pearson read a statement thanking the community for joining the city commissioners, and all staff, in a shared commitment to keeping the city a safe, liveable and welcoming community. She said there is no higher priority for each member of the city commission and the staff.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Lange – Mr. Lange said he takes exception to the statement read by Paul Oberdorfer. He said that the commission did know about the battery burning because he brought it up on two occasions. RAPCA didn't come and check on the operation at all. Shame on EPA and RAPCA for not coming. He asked who the watchdog was from the city.

Paul Simmons – Mr. Simmons said the actions taken tonight, by not enacting new rules, show grace, respect and intelligence.

Tom Homan – Mr. Homan echoes the presentation from the Child Advocacy Center and wants to say how great they are. He also said it is important to have them in Miami County and we are lucky they're here.

Gary Koenig – Mr. Koenig did not agree with changing the order of public comment before the legislation. Commissioner Lee assured him that citizens would have the opportunity to talk after each piece of legislation also.

Scott Phillips – Mr. Phillips thanked the commissioners for stopping the burning. He said the next step is to remove the toxins. Mr. Phillips said he hasn't seen anything happening at the site. He asked if we were going to be left with the cleanup bill. Mr. Phillips asked if we knew when the cleanup will happen.

Mary Simmons – Ms. Simmons read a screenshot that she alleged was a post by Nick Warner. She said we need help and is concerned EPA testing is not done. She asked the commissioners if they wanted to drink the water.

Alisha Lange – Ms. Lange stated that she is a digital marketer. Ms. Lange contacted 911 on September 10 and requested the logs. She went over the call logs and said she had a question about one from 2016.

Eva Silvers – Ms. Silvers said she is looking for answers. She said no one is being specific on when testing was done. Ms. Silvers said she feels like they're being lied to and asked who was supposed to oversee the operation of burning batteries. She's concerned for her kids and grandkids.

Debbie Stein – Ms. Stein asked when the fire training would begin at the Safety Training Center. Paul Oberdorfer said it would be sometime after November 22. Debbie asked if it was going to be decontaminated. Paul Oberdorfer said the site will be prepared and the firefighters will have the appropriate safety equipment on. Ms. Stein said the toxins are not going away.

Larry Hamilton – Mr. Hamilton applauded his fellow neighbors for taking action. He discussed black history and his personal vision for Piqua.

Diana Park – Ms. Park said she sees Bowling Green as the problem. She asked what the city was going to do with the red building. Ms. Park said that we have to move forward and thinks Bowling Green should help pay for the cleanup.

Dave Smith – Mr. Smith expressed his displeasure with several things, from the police department, code enforcement and the battery burning facility. Chief Rick Byron met with him individually to address some of his concerns.

Jeff Grimes – Mr. Grimes demanded that the old water plant be made a crime scene and that charges be filed. Mr. Grimes reread the statement put out by the city and disagreed with calling the old water plant a Safety Training Center.

Chuck Starrett – Mr. Starrett appreciates the investment that Winans has made in Piqua. Mr. Starrett said that mental health can be caused by these commission meetings. He said that each commissioner took an oath and has their own power. He said they shouldn't let anyone else tell them what to do. Mr. Starrett said that the minutes were not detailed enough and should be word for word.

Melony Walker – Ms. Walker said that she and her husband made a choice to move to Piqua because they love this town and the community. They also moved their business here. She thinks the battery burning facility is a concern but said that we don't need to keep bashing it. Ms. Walker said she would like to see us come together.

Joe Wilson – Mr. Wilson gave an update on the Neighbors helping Neighbors program that he oversees. He said that they painted four homes and could use more volunteer's next season. Mr. Wilson said that he sees a lot of energy in the room tonight and maybe some of the people present could help in a more positive way by volunteering.

Josh Blackshire – Mr. Blackshire thanked the commission for withdrawing the Ordinance to change the rules for commission meetings. Mr. Blackshire said the battery burn operation should be blamed on RAPCA and EPA. He suggested we bring a third party in for cleanup and send the bill to ESRG. Mr. Blackshire mentioned a new website he started called Talk Piqua.

Kay Moore – Ms. Moore stated that she received notice that she had to take down a carport that her husband put up for her. She noticed a lot of other homes still have them and asked when they will be made to remove them.

Leslie Lewis – Ms. Lewis commented that the paving on Wood Street is good but a lot of other roads that have been paved are not good. Ms. Lewis asked what long-term health conditions the citizens may face due to the battery burning operation.

Tonya Blair – Ms. Blair said she wants what is best for the city and wants us to work together.

Kevin Jenkins – Mr. Jenkins feels like the city is a dictatorship. He asked how much the city has made off the battery burning operation. Kevin said he made a complaint about standing water outside of his house and was told he needed a new catch basin. It still hasn't been done and recently the street was paved. Mr. Jenkins asked who was paying for the dirt to be moved on the lot by Crooked Handle. Paul Oberdorfer said the city owns the lot and it is part of the Lock9 project.

OLD BUSINESS

ORDINANCE NO. O-12-23 (3rd Reading)

An ordinance declaring the improvement to certain parcels of real property to be a public purpose and exempt from taxation; establishing a Tax Increment Equivalent Fund and providing for the collection and deposit of service payments into that fund; specifying the public infrastructure improvements directly benefiting the property; and authorizing a Development Agreement with Ascend Wellness Holdings

Introduction: Chris Schmiesing said this ordinance is to establish a parcel tax increment financing (TIF) tool to enable improvements to Recker Road that will allow for the redevelopment of property fronting E. Ash Street east of Looney Road. The owners of Ascent said they discussed this with the school district as a courtesy as it was not required.

Commissioner Comments: None

Public Comments: None

Action Taken: A motion was made by Commissioner Lee to approve O-12-23 and Commissioner Hinds seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. R-111-23 (Postponed)A resolution approving an Investment Policy for the City of Piqua

Action Taken: Mayor Pearson said this Resolution will be postponed until November 7, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE NO. O-13-23 (1st Reading)

An ordinance relating to rules of conduct for Piqua city commission meetings.

Action taken: Commissioner Hinds made a motion to remove this ordinance and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Lee. All approved and the motion carried.

RESOLUTION NO. R-118-23

A resolution of intent to vacate an Easement from Lakewood Place to Echo Lake

Introduction: Chris Schmiesing said the property owner submitted an application for vacation of an unutilized easement and acquire a portion of the adjacent property to expand the available lot area for a planned property improvement. If approved, this will go before the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Comments: None

Public Comments: None

Action Taken: Mayor Pearson made a motion to approve R-118-23 and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Vetter. All approved and the motion carried.

RESOLUTION NO. R-119-23

A resolution authorizing the city manager to enter into preliminary legislation with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) for the IR-75 Bridge Expansion Joints Project

Introduction: Chris Schmiesing said prior to performing such projects ODOT requires the consent of the locality before proceeding with the work.

Commissioner Comments: None

Public Comments: None

Action Taken: Commissioner Hinds made a motion to approve R-119-23 and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Lee. All approved and the motion carried.

RESOLUTION NO. R-120-23

A resolution authorizing the city manager to enter into preliminary legislation with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) for the MIA IR 75 Culvert Paving Project

Introduction: Chris Schmiesing said this item is preliminary legislation showing support of the project that ODOT is doing on the MIA IR 75 Culvert Paving Project.

Action taken: Mayor Pearson made a motion to approve R-120-23 and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Vetter. All approved and the motion carried.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Paul Oberdorfer announced that capital improvement project work will begin on Main Street. Existing trees will be removed, new trees will be planted, and traffic calming work will be performed. The project is set to be completed in 2024.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENT

Commissioner Hinds thanked Kathy Sherman for talking about the good things going on and she also thanked the Reisner's for their investment in Piqua. Commissioner Hinds announced that she has a few extra handouts from the Child Advocacy Center if anyone would like one.

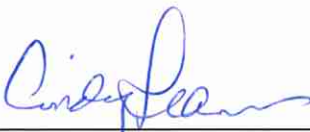
Commissioner Lee asked Paul Oberdorfer if he could contact Kevin Jenkins to resolve his water problem. Commissioner Lee asked Alishia Lange to forward him the question she raised about 911 reports during public comment. He said he didn't feel the new rules were going to pass because he wants to hear everyone and not limit the number of comments. He said he was willing to meet weekly if needed so we can move past this. He invited everyone to a fundraiser at Scottish Thistle on October 30. He said he was born and raised in this town, lived in Rossville and plans on dying in this town. He is willing to listen.

Commissioner Vetter said people are starting to express concerns about their utility bills. He is convinced that we have one of the best power companies in the area. Our water may be a little higher due to paying off a new plant, but the citizens can attend a board meeting at any time. Commissioner Vetter is a big supporter of spay and neutering stray cats and hopes we can continue to support that. He said he will not use foul language in any of his dealings. He's interested in a first-time homeowners' program and he is starting conversations to save Hance Pavilion.

Mayor Pearson announced Operation Green Light which is an initiative by the Miami County Veterans Association. The Veterans Assoc. is focusing on getting businesses and citizens to shine a green light bulb on Veterans Day to show support for our veterans. Green light bulbs will be passed out November 3 from 11-2 in the lobby of the Municipal Government Complex.

ADJOURNMENT at 7:55 p.m.

Passed 11.7.2023

Approved 

Attest Melissa Kinney

Mayor Pearson