



City of Fort Wright

409 Kyles Lane | Fort Wright, KY 41011 | www.fortwright.com | 859.331.1700

City of Fort Wright Council Meeting Wednesday, January 3, 2024 – 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The Council Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mayor Dave Hatter. Mayor Hatter led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. City Clerk Maura Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Present
Councilman Collins	Present
Councilman Wall	Present
Councilman Weber	Absent
Councilman Wessels	Present
Councilwoman Witt	Present

Also present for the meeting were:

City Administrator Jill Bailey
Fire/EMS Chief Steve Schewe
Police Chief Ed Butler
Public Works Director Jeff Bethell
City Clerk Maura Russell
Finance Clerk Kelly Perry

CITIZEN COMMENTS/GUESTS

There were no citizen comments.

APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES

Councilwoman Witt made a motion to approve the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023. Councilman Wall made a second. Ms. Russell called roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Collins	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Abstain
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

Councilman Wessels made a motion to amend the agenda to add an Executive Session under KRS 61.810(1)(b), deliberations on the future acquisition or sale of real property, and 61.810(1)(c), discussions of proposed or pending litigation, as well as re-order the New Business to move the audit presentation to the end of that section. Councilman Collins made a second. Ms. Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Collins	Yes

Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Fort Henry Phase 2 Project – Bid Estimates – Mayor Hatter announced that feedback from Phase One of the Fort Henry Street Project has been great overall.

Marty Hellmann, CT Consultants, addressed Council providing a financial update on the Phase One project. He said the original contract price was \$997,000 and SD1 has reimbursed \$101,000 for storm sewer work and the project came in under budget. He said the final cost to the City is approximately \$887,000.

Mr. Hellmann said the proposal for Phase Two, which will stretch from General Drive to Pickett Drive and then from near 422 Fort Henry Drive to Amsterdam Road, is estimated to cost \$650,000. He said he anticipates a reimbursement from SD1 of \$60,000, which would make the ending cost to the City around \$590,000. Mr. Hellmann said the intent is to bid the project out in February for construction to start in April and end in the fall.

Councilman Wessels said the \$650,000 project cost is in line with what the City has been spending annually on street projects and then made a motion to authorize CT Consultants to move forward on the bidding process for Phase Two of the Fort Henry Street Project. Councilman Abeln made a second. Ms. Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Collins	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

Mayor Hatter thanked SD1 for being a great community partner to help align projects and lessen the impact on taxpayers.

Mr. Hellmann also provided an update on the sidewalk project at Sleepy Hollow Road and Dixie Highway. He said the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet has finished their work and the crosswalk remains mid-road near 1309 Sleepy Hollow Road because of grading issues on adjoining property making any changes to the major intersection crosswalk cost prohibitive.

NEW BUSINESS

PDS Council Appointment – Ms. Bailey said Councilman Wessels is currently the City's representative to the Planning and Development Services Board and Councilman Collins is the alternate. She said Councilman Wessels has expressed his desire to continue this one-year term appointment.

Councilman Abeln made a motion to reappoint Councilman Wessels as the City's PDS Council representative and Councilman Collins as the City's alternate. Councilman Wall made a second. Ms. Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Collins	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

OKI Board of Directors Appointment – Ms. Bailey advised the City’s appointment to the OKI Regional Council of Governments’ Board of Directors is Councilman Wessels, but he has advised he will be unable to continue this appointment. Mayor Hatter was self-nominated for the 2024 appointment.

Councilman Wessels made a motion to appoint Mayor Hatter as the City’s representative to the OKI Regional Council of Governments’ Board of Directors. Councilwoman Witt made a second. Ms. Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes	
Councilman Collins	Yes	
Councilman Wall	Yes	
Councilman Wessels	Yes	
Councilwoman Witt	Yes	MOTION CARRIED

Resolution 01-2024 Proposing a Name for the I-75 Companion Bridge – Mr. Theissen read Resolution 01-2024, a Resolution of the City of Fort Wright, in Kenton County, Kentucky, proposing the name of the I-75 companion bridge be “The Black Brigade of Cincinnati Bridge.”

Councilman Wall made a motion to approve Resolution 01-2024. Councilman Collins made a second.

Mayor Hatter thanked resident Tim Seigrist for suggesting this name, saying it is an exceptional idea to honor the brave heroes from the Civil War. He also thanked Mr. Theissen and his team for their research and Dave Schroeder, Executive Director of the Kenton County Public Library, and Paul Tenkotte, a former Fort Wright resident, for confirming the historical accuracy of the work. Mayor Hatter said he will send it to the appropriate channels to see what can happen. Mr. Seigrist said he intends to present this request to the City of Covington and the City of Cincinnati also.

Ms. Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes	
Councilman Collins	Yes	
Councilman Wall	Yes	
Councilman Wessels	Yes	
Councilwoman Witt	Yes	MOTION CARRIED

KY Deferred Comp Joinder Agreement and Resolution 02-2024 – Ms. Bailey advised Council that the City currently participates in this program and the state is asking for an updated agreement to be signed by the Mayor. She said the Resolution is authorizing the Mayor to sign the agreement to continue participation. Ms. Bailey also clarified that employees voluntarily participate in this program via the City collecting from their paychecks and sending those funds on their behalf. She said there is no City contribution for this program. Ms. Bailey also confirmed no other payroll deductions are allowed, aside from wage garnishments like child support.

Mr. Theissen read Resolution 02-2024, authorizing Mayor Hatter to execute the Joinder Agreement with the Kentucky Public Employees’ Deferred Compensation Authority (KDC), which authorizes KDC to administer the 457 and 401(k) plans on behalf of the City of Fort Wright.

Councilman Wall made a motion to approve Resolution 02-2024. Councilman Abeln made a second. Ms. Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Collins	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

FY23-24 Audit – John Chamberlin, Chamberlin Owen – Mr. Chamberlin presented the financial statements for the fiscal year-ended June 30, 2023. He thanked Ms. Bailey, Ms. Perry, Ms. Russell, and Mr. Harrison for their time and attention while his staff was on-site and in follow-up conversations.

Mr. Chamberlin presented the following:

- Audited financial statements were presented in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States (GAAP);
- An unmodified opinion was issued, meaning no modifications were required to the opinion and they are stated fairly; this is the highest opinion they can give;
- There were no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control;
- There were no instances of non-compliance with laws or grant or bond arrangements; the City is fully compliant with KRS [Kentucky Retirement Systems] and CERS [County Employee Retirement System];
- The City has approximately 20 months of cash on hand; minimum recommendation is three months.

Mr. Chamberlin said the City is in a great financial position and that no adjustments have had to be made to any funds. He said there was no management letter issued because there was no need.

Mayor Hatter thanked Mr. Chamberlin and his team, saying he is happy with the work they have done to help the City firm up financial controls over the last few years. He also thanked the Finance Committee and Council for continuing to do the right things on behalf of the taxpayers and employees. Mayor Hatter added that all documents are, or will be soon, available on the City's website.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee – Councilman Wessels – Councilman Wessels had no report.

Community Improvement Committee – Councilwoman Witt – Councilwoman Witt said she will have updates at the upcoming Caucus Meeting.

CAO REPORT

Ms. Bailey had no report.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Administration – Ms. Russell advised delinquent tax bills will be mailed tomorrow, January 4th.

Finance – Ms. Perry provided updates on unpaid property tax bills, saying only 5% of real and 9% of personal property tax bills are delinquent.

Ms. Bailey added that South Hills Civic Club rental tracking has shown that 83 rentals occurred in 2023 and most are on the weekends and by residents. She said the City is seeing a return on the investment of upgrades made to the facility.

Fire/ALS Department – Chief Schewe said he has been working with Ms. Perry and Ms. Russell to provide information to the Medicare data collection program.

Police Department – Chief Butler advised there was a large narcotics transaction, called a “buy-bust”, at the Fort Wright Walmart today, January 3rd, but it did not involve the Fort Wright Police Department. He thanked the Northern Kentucky Drug Strike Force for their efforts in taking a large amount of fentanyl off the streets.

There was discussion about the ongoing efforts to curb traffic issues at Kyles Lane and Highland Pike, with Chief Butler saying they will continue to watch now that school is back in session. Mayor Hatter mentioned requesting from the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet additional signage or more road striping and arrows.

Public Works Department – Mr. Bethell said a new full-time employee has been hired and they have been working hard to get him ready for winter weather. He also said new trucks have come in and he is waiting for some additional equipment to arrive.

Legal Counsel – Mr. Theissen had no report.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Employee Recognitions/Special Thank You’s – Mayor Hatter read from thank you notes to Mr. Bethell and to Police Officer Getz.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

There were no Council Comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Wessels made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session under KRS 61.810(1)(b), deliberations on the future acquisition or sale of real property by a public agency, but only when publicity would be likely to affect the value of a specific piece of property to be acquired for public use or sold by a public agency, and KRS 61.810(1)(c), discussions of proposed or pending litigation against or on behalf of the public agency. Councilman Wall made a second. Ms. Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Collins	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

The Council Meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 7:14 PM.

The Council Meeting was reopened to the public at 7:56 PM.

Councilman Collins made a motion to approve the amended contract to purchase the Lookout Heights Civic Club and authorize the Mayor to sign and move forward with closing. Councilwoman Witt made a second. Ms. Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Collins	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

Councilman Wall made a motion to authorize the City Attorney to assist Fort Wright Civic Club in organizing to move forward with the donation of their property to the City, at a cost of no more than \$5,000 in legal expenses without additional approval. Councilman Abeln made a second. Ms. Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Collins	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

Councilwoman Witt made a motion to authorize the City Attorney to move forward with the foreclosure of the properties at 420 General Drive and 426 Morris Road due to code enforcement violations. Councilman Abeln made a second. Ms. Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Collins	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

Councilman Wessels made a motion to adjourn the Council Meeting. Councilman Wall made a second. Ms. Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Collins	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

The Council Meeting adjourned at 7:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Hatter, Mayor

Attest:



Maura Russell, City Clerk