



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 6, 2021 – 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	Here
Councilman Feinauer	Here
Councilman Wall	Absent
Councilman Weber	Here
Councilman Wessels	Here
Councilwoman Witt	Absent

Also present for the meeting were:

City Administrative Officer Jill Bailey
City Attorney Tim Theissen
Fire/EMS Chief Steve Schewe
Police Chief Ed Butler
Public Works Director Jeff Bethell
City Clerk Maura Russell
Treasurer/Senior Deputy Clerk Susan Ellis
City Engineer Mark Bruggemann

CITIZEN COMMENTS/GUESTS

Mayor Hatter began by wishing everyone a Happy New Year.

There were no citizen comments or guests.

APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES

Councilman Wessels made a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on Wednesday, December 16, 2020. Councilman Weber made a second. City Clerk Maura Russell called roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Feinauer	Yes
Councilman Weber	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Unfinished Business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Improvement Committee - Chair Councilman Feinauer said there will be a committee meeting soon to review action items. He said things are going well with the Gateway Project [new City signage] and they are waiting on quotes to come back for signage. Ms. Bailey commented that the City is still working with the State to gain additional input on the permitting process.

Economic Development Committee - Chair Councilman Abeln said there has been some activity recently, with plans to be discussed regarding a new car wash at the next Kenton County Planning Commission meeting tomorrow, January 7, 2021. He said the applicant's zoning request will be discussed at that meeting.

Mayor Hatter said a new bank will be moving into the City soon. He said business continues to flourish, which is important as over 60% of the City's revenue comes from businesses. He also asked for an update on Smoothie King. Ms. Bailey said they were no longer looking at their original site and had been looking at the Golden Corral site, but another developer has submitted a proposal for development on that site.

Finance Committee - Chair Councilman Wessels had nothing to report but said Treasurer/Senior Deputy Clerk Susan Ellis would provide an update on property taxes.

Mayor Hatter said he wanted to commend the Finance Committee one more time for their hard work on the Investment Policy, especially Councilman Weber. He said a lot of time was spent on this Policy, with Councilman Weber, Councilman Wessels, Ms. Bailey, Tim Sullivan, and Tim Theissen all weighing in. He said the Policy will ensure the City stays within Kentucky laws and takes a conservative approach. Mayor Hatter continued, saying a substantial amount of money sits in the bank doing nothing and the hope is this will generate revenue and continue to keep taxes lower in the City.

Councilman Wessels asked if there were updates from Mr. Sullivan regarding the projection spreadsheet. Councilman Weber said Mr. Sullivan is working on the projections but is very busy with other items and he will send it over once he has had time to finish. He said once it is approved there will be standard operating procedures set in place for Ms. Bailey and Ms. Ellis to operate the spreadsheet.

Human Resources Committee - Chair Councilman Weber said testing continues for the police department's new hire, and he will let Chief Butler discuss.

CAO REPORT

Ms. Bailey said she submitted a report to Council and can answer any questions. She added that she is still working on employee benefit provisions. Ms. Bailey said staying with United Healthcare for health insurance will result in an increase of 3%. She said if the City moves its life insurance policy to United Healthcare, they will give a rate decrease and may also be able to give the City a rate guarantee until 2023, which could show a reduction in employee benefits. She continued, saying adding long-term disability to the plan could give a rate guarantee through 2023. She said moving all plans to United Healthcare would give the City a discount across all three lines. She advised Council she will update with more information as soon as she receives it.

Councilman Weber asked if an employee leaves will they able to take the long-term disability policy with them. Ms. Bailey said no, the policy would discontinue because it is a group policy.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Administration/Finance – Ms. Ellis said the updated copy of tax collections was distributed to Council for review. She said 124 delinquent bills will be sent out by the end of the week for those properties not yet paid in full. She said there is some fluctuation on the report for the amount billed for property and tangible taxes, but that is because of penalty and interest applied.

Mayor Hatter thanked Ms. Ellis, Ms. Russell, and Ms. Bailey for their efforts with collecting taxes. He said it is one of the most critical pieces because this is about 40% of the City's revenue. He reviewed the report Ms. Ellis provided, pointing out that the 3.46% outstanding property taxes payments is a huge testament to those who live in the City and pay their taxes. He said it is appreciated when taxes are paid on time. Mayor Hatter continued, saying the City hates to charge penalty and interest but if the deadline is missed then penalty and interest will not be waived. He said it is a City Ordinance, and neither he nor Council have the authority to waive the penalty and interest. He continued, saying the City offers multiple, reasonable payment options and no waivers will be granted.

Councilman Wessels requested a list of delinquent properties and Ms. Ellis advised she can provide that.

Mayor Hatter pointed out a couple more items from the tax collections information, including the percentage of collected property tax dollars, which is almost 97%, and the amount of money collected for third and fourth quarter insurance premium taxes, which was \$427,455.70.

Fire/ALS Department – Chief Schewe said vaccinations for First Responders started today and he reported 100% compliance for the City's full-time Fire staff.

Chief Schewe advised that a second ambulance has been purchased to be used as a backup, and all work has been done except for decals. He said once decals are added there will be a virtual inspection by KBEMS [Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services]. He said he expects it will pass inspection and then will be able to take calls. Chief Schewe said this ambulance will replace the one recently taken out of commission and will work well for the department.

Mayor Hatter commented that this ambulance was found at a neighboring city and was purchased because the other back-up was not optimal. He said this is a great thing for residents and he commended Chief Schewe for finding the ambulance and moving quickly.

Legal Counsel – Mr. Theissen had no report but said there will be information to present in Executive Session.

Police Department – Chief Butler introduced the new design for the Police Department cruisers, which Ms. Bailey displayed on the televisions in Council Chambers. He said it has been completed on Captain Jonathan Colwell's new Dodge Durango and will roll out on other vehicles as they come into commission.

Chief Butler said the vaccination process began for the Police Department today. He also said the hiring process for the officer who will replace retired Sergeant George Kreutzjans is still moving forward and he was in Richmond today taking the final test. He said he hopes all goes well and he will be able to introduce the new officer at the February Council Meeting.

Councilman Wessels asked about the parking issue on Hazelwood he raised at the December Special Council Meeting. Mr. Bethell said that would be addressed during the January Caucus Meeting.

Public Works – Mr. Bethell reported that the Public Works team has been cleaning up honeysuckle at Battery Hooper Park. He said they have also started working on the sign inventory to replace old and faded street signs and correct those that need to be reset. He said there have been a couple of rounds of snow, including on Christmas morning, and the team has done a great job.

Mr. Bethell provided an update on the Amsterdam Road project, saying the storm sewer work continues toward Redwood for a couple more weeks then will be working for a couple more weeks below Morris. Councilman Weber asked if SD1 [Sanitation District No. 1 of Northern Kentucky] was handling the storm sewers. Mr. Bethell said SD1 will inspect, but Ford Development is doing the installation.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Employee Recognitions/Special Thank You's – Mayor Hatter reminded residents the Fire Department is hosting a blood drive on January 14, 2021. Hoxworth Blood Center will have their mobile donor vehicle in the City Administration parking lot from 12 – 6 PM. He said they may accept walk-up donors but recommended registering in advance.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Feinauer wished everyone a Happy New Year. He also thanked the Public Works Department for getting roads salted on Christmas day. He said it was wonderful seeing their dedication that early in the morning.

Councilman Abeln, Councilman Weber, and Councilman Wessels also wished everyone a Happy New Year.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Hatter requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session under KRS 61.810 (1)(c), discussions of proposed or pending litigation against or on behalf of the public agency, and KRS 61.810 (1)(b), deliberations on the future acquisition or sale of real property by a public agency. A motion was made by Councilman Wessels. Councilman Feinauer made a second. City Clerk Maura Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln Yes

Councilman Feinauer Yes

Councilman Weber Yes

Councilman Wessels Yes

MOTION CARRIED

The Council Meeting was adjourned to Executive Session at 6:25 PM.

The Council Meeting was reopened to the public at 7:29 PM.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

Councilman Weber made a motion to adjourn the Council Meeting. Councilman Feinauer made a second. All voting in favor.

The Council Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Hatter", is written over the text "Respectfully submitted,".

Dave Hatter, Mayor

Attest:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Maura Russell", is written above the text "Maura Russell City Clerk".

Maura Russell

City Clerk