



City of Fort Wright

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City of Fort Wright Council Meeting Wednesday, February 3, 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	Here
Councilman Weber	Absent
Councilman Wessels	Here
Councilwoman Witt	Here

Also present for the meeting were:

City Administrative Officer Jill Bailey
City Attorney Tim Theissen
Fire/EMS Chief Steve Schewe
Police Captain Jonathan Colwell
Public Works Director Jeff Bethell
City Clerk Maura Russell

CITIZEN COMMENTS/GUESTS

There were no citizen comments or guests.

APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES

The approval of the minutes for Wednesday, January 6, 2021, Council Meeting were tabled due to lack of quorum for approval.

Councilman Abeln made a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on Wednesday, January 20, 2021. Councilman Feinauer made a second. City Clerk Maura Russell called roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Feinauer	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

Councilwoman Witt made a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on Wednesday, January 20, 2021. Councilman Wall made a second. City Clerk Maura Russell called roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Feinauer	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2nd Reading of Ordinance 01-2021 re: Tax Amnesty Program – Mr. Theissen read Ordinance 01-2021, an Ordinance of the City of Fort Wright, in Kenton County, Kentucky, establishing an amnesty program for penalties imposed for delinquent real estate taxes for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, and ending June 30, 2021 upon real estate in the City of Fort Wright, Kentucky; postponing imposition of said penalties and interest to April 30, 2021.

Mayor Hatter thanked the almost 97% of residents in Fort Wright who paid their taxes on time. He reminded residents that this is their City, and their money makes this all possible. He commented that 2020 was an unusual year, including questions about the mail system and even Councilmembers mentioning to him personal issues with the mail. He said that instead of spending time fighting for \$16,000 in penalties and interest on approximately 4% of bills mailed, Council has made a magnanimous gesture that only they can do, as Council sets the Ordinances and tax rates, not himself as Mayor or City staff. Mayor Hatter said Council looked at this issue and the situation and made a one-time exception to waive penalty and interest if bills were paid by April 30th, 2021. He said he feels Council did the right thing in making this generous, reasonable decision and it shows they are not trying to rule over anyone.

Ms. Bailey said if the vote passes the City will issue a letter to everyone on the delinquent list and issue refunds to those who paid late. She reminded residents that this will take time, but everyone who paid penalty and interest will get a refund.

Mayor Hatter said Council will be looking at the next tax Ordinance to be sure it is fine-tuned and to set reasonable expectations for the residents.

Councilman Wall made a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 01-2021. Councilman Feinauer made a second. City Clerk Maura Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Feinauer	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

Executive Order 01-2021 appointing Ramage Museum Board Members – Ms. Bailey said in December three Board Members chose to not be reappointed and the City has received two applications for new members. She said the Museum Board has approved and requested these appointments. Ms. Bailey said

she has received subsequent emails that there may be additional appointments coming. She told Council it was up to them to act on these two appointments tonight, knowing they may ask for additional appointments later. She confirmed the Board can have up to 12 members according to its bylaws.

Mayor Hatter asked if the Board would have enough members to take action with a quorum if Council chose to not act this evening. Ms. Bailey said they may not. Mayor Hatter recommended taking action tonight and then see what they come back with.

Ms. Bailey commented on the expirations of the Board Member terms, saying they are penciled in to stagger to keep everyone from falling off at the same time, but the bylaws mention three-year appointment terms. Mayor Hatter said he thinks that was approved by Council a long time ago.

Councilman Abeln requested confirmation on the vetting process, asking if the Board is doing that and then sending it to Council to approve their recommendations. Ms. Bailey confirmed that resumes were sent over to Council for review and Chief Butler has done appropriate background checks with no issues arising. She said her indication that the Board approved the appointments is coming from the Board President and she has not seen any meeting minutes.

Councilman Wessels commented on the experience level of one candidate, saying he had an impressive resume. Ms. Bailey said one was very impressive but lives in Cincinnati and asked if that was an issue for Council. Councilman Wessels said if people of that caliber want to be on the Board then they should be approved.

A motion to approve Executive Order 01-2021 was made by Councilman Wessels. Councilman Feinauer made a second. City Clerk Maura Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Feinauer	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

Municipal Order 01-2021 declaring Surplus Property – Ms. Bailey said there are two office items to get rid of, an office chair and a laptop computer. She also said there is a Police Department cruiser and 2009 Ambulance, which was replaced with the unit acquired from Fort Thomas, that need to be surplus.

Councilman Wall made a motion to approve Municipal Order 01-2021. Councilwoman Witt made a second. City Clerk Maura Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Feinauer	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Improvement Committee - Chair Councilman Feinauer said the Gateway Signage Project has stalled a bit because of COVID and staffing issues with KYTC [Kentucky Transportation Cabinet]. He said they did provide feedback, saying the signage around Interstate 275 ramps would not be approved because of future planning designs. He said the locations for the signs at Interstate 71/75 will require state engineering approval because they fall within FHA [Federal Highway Administration] jurisdiction, but the Committee is awaiting additional information from a liaison in Frankfort and a contact in Louisville. Mayor Hatter commented that the signs on the wall behind Councilman Feinauer and Councilwoman Witt show what the signs will look like, with the potential for larger signs on the expressway areas.

Councilman Feinauer said the next step is to move forward with the design for local City signs and prepare bid documents so the Public Works Department can install those while efforts continue on the major gateways. He said there will be a Committee meeting on February 10th at 5:30 PM and the spreadsheet for projects is almost done, so that Committee members can get started on what still needs to be done.

Mayor Hatter said he thinks the City signs are going to look great and commended the Committee for their work. Councilman Feinauer thanked CT Consultants for finding quality material that will last and is also reflective.

Economic Development Committee - Chair Councilman Abeln said there will soon be plenty of opportunities to get a car wash in the City. He said Golden Corral is being demolished to make way for Mike's Car Wash on that site. Ms. Bailey commented that CareFirst Urgent Care has opened their newest location last Tuesday in Fort Wright.

Mayor Hatter said the City continues to be fortunate to have high quality businesses like CareFirst locate here. He said over 60% of overall revenue comes from business taxes and fees and that helps keep residential taxes low. Mayor Hatter said a lot of businesses have come to the City in the last five years and the City is open for business and would love to have more.

Councilman Wessels said there is a Kenton County Planning Commission meeting tomorrow night [Thursday, February 4th, 2021] to discuss a proposed coffee shop between Citizens Bank and BB&T Bank on Highland Pike. He said they have reviewed the plans and the parking situation and how it will affect other businesses. Councilman Wessels said Ms. Bailey plans to attend the meeting to bring up some items. Councilman Abeln said the vision is to have a drive through component for the coffee shop and they have worked on a parking agreement. He said there are not a lot of drive-thru coffee shops locally, so he thinks this will be well used. Ms. Bailey said it is currently at stage one. She said if KCPC approves the plan it will not come back to the City unless an objection is filed within 21 days.

Councilman Feinauer asked if there was a list or file of projects, whether they are ongoing, stalled, or proposed. Ms. Bailey said she has attempted that in the past, but the situations develop so rapidly that she has not had a lot of success.

Mayor Hatter said he believes another bank will be taking over the old US Bank site on Dixie Highway. Ms. Bailey said there is also potential expansion of an existing subdivision off Old 17.

Finance Committee - Chair Councilman Wessels said the Committee met with the representative from RedTree Investment Group so that the City can move to the next stage in the investment process. He said they were given a copy of the proposed investment guidelines which are very conservative. He said Councilman Abeln attended on behalf of Councilman Weber, who was not able to attend, and they were able to give suggestions on possible revenue gain on interest. Councilman Wessels said it will not be quite what was budgeted but there will be adjustments made. He said he will ask for Council's approval to go to the next phase, which is moving \$3 million from savings to the US Bank account from which RedTree will use to make investments. He also said the conversation was good and on track with Council's intentions. He said there will not be a lot of money made because interest rates are so low, but it will be more than if the money was just sitting in the bank.

Councilman Abeln commented that the conversation was right in line with everything that had been presented to Council previously, including the potential investment strategy that was very close to what was seen when RedTree first presented to Council. He also said he agrees with Councilman Wessels, that not a lot of interest will be earned, but it will be better than sitting in a bank account. Ms. Bailey said RedTree presented a conservative plan knowing interest rates can only go up from here.

Councilman Wessels said he wants to be sure Council is on board with having Mayor Hatter and Ms. Bailey transfer the funds to the US Bank account for investing. Mayor Hatter gave thanks to Councilman Wessels and Councilman Weber for their hard work, including coming up with the Investment Policy modeled off other cities and state regulations. He said a lot of work has been done to get to a place of comfort with moving the money, with a conservative approach to generate interest on principal. He said that the money does not belong to Council but to the residents whom they serve and RedTree specializes in these types of municipal investments. He said he is personally surprised with how frugal the members of the Committee are that they would want to move this much money, but he also knows that it is completely reasonable based on the amount of savings the City has, and it is in line with everything that has been discussed and studied over the last few months. Mayor Hatter again expressed appreciation Councilman Weber and Councilman Wessels for shepherding the City to this point and taking a huge step for the City to generate revenue for projects instead of taking it from residents' pockets. Councilman Wessels also thanked Ms. Bailey for her work in helping the Committee.

Councilman Wessels said he hoped to have Susan Ellis, Treasurer/Senior Deputy Clerk, at the meeting this evening but he said as a part of her reporting she will receive a quarterly report from RedTree to present to Council, and Ms. Bailey, Ms. Ellis, Ben Harrison [City Bookkeeper], and the Finance Committee will receive a monthly report for review. He also reminded Council that with the investments the interest may not show each month because of the way things are calculated, and if anyone on Council wanted to see a report at anytime to let Ms. Bailey know and she will get it to them.

Councilman Abeln said it is important to note that some of the money made on the investments are paid at maturity, so the balance may not appear to go up. He also said the interest is reinvested in the account, so it is not going anywhere else.

Mayor Hatter reminded residents that this information is all public record and can be requested by anyone at any time, as the money belongs to residents. He said the Finance Committee and RedTree have put together something that is very safe, including from a cybersecurity standpoint. Ms. Bailey said that all new investments will be appropriately documented in the audit.

Councilman Wessels made a motion to authorize Ms. Bailey and Mayor Hatter to proceed to the next step to transfer money from the City savings account to the US Bank investment account, to not exceed \$3 million. Councilman Feinauer made a second. City Clerk Maura Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Feinauer	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

Human Resources Committee - Chair Councilman Weber was not present, so Ms. Bailey gave a report on his behalf. She said that the newest police officer will start around February 15th and the City is looking forward to him joining the staff officially. She said there are multiple part-time positions open, including one in the Public Works Department and a part-time Paramedic in the Fire Department, and asked for people to spread the word so the City could attract the right candidates. Ms. Bailey said there has been discussion on the dress code policy for the Public Works Department and she has submitted that information for the Committee to review at the next meeting.

Mayor Hatter asked residents to help the City share the two job postings on social media to amplify the message on multiple platforms. He said the more the information is shared, the more time and money the City can save. He also commented on the new Police Officer, saying the process has been cumbersome but he will bring the Department to full strength.

CAO REPORT

Ms. Bailey said there are several grant applications pending. She said Ms. Ellis is working on another component of the CARES Act [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act] for utility funding for those behind on bills. She said Ms. Ellis participated in a call with NKADD [Northern Kentucky Area Development District], the agency leading that grant process. She advised Council that they will need to pass a Resolution and hold a public hearing for this, but more information will be forthcoming.

Ms. Bailey said the City is also looking at a grant for SNK Funds [Surface Transportation Program for Northern Kentucky] for a section of sidewalk on Sleepy Hollow Road near St. Agnes Church. She said she thinks the City can score high on this funding because of the Safe Ways to School Program, which would make this a great opportunity to finish that section of sidewalk.

Ms. Bailey advised Council there will be contract issues to discuss at the next Caucus Meeting, including waste services with Rumpke and the EMS contracts with the cities of Park Hills and Kentonvale. Councilman Wessels asked if the EMS contracts will be sent to the Finance Committee for review and Ms. Bailey confirmed that.

Mayor Hatter commented on the SNK funding for the sidewalk, saying they landed on this project because there is not much time to get a grant submitted and the Safe Schools portion would take more precedence in review. He also said it is not just important for St. Agnes Church and School to have the sidewalks, but also for the large amount of people who walk in the area in general.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Administration/Finance – Ms. Russell reported that Passport Acceptance is going well, and she anticipates the appointments for this service increasing as people plan more travel. She also reported that she and Mr. Bethell recently completed a two-day FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] training. Ms. Bailey congratulated Ms. Russell and Mr. Bethell, saying different levels of training are required for all staff for emergency funding eligibility.

Fire/ALS Department – Chief Schewe said the KBEMS [Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services] performed a 117-point inspection of the second ambulance and it passed. He said it will go into service for the community.

Chief Schewe said the second round of Covid-19 vaccines for staff will begin next week. He said the department is at 100% compliance and he expects everyone to be finished by Thursday.

Chief Schewe also mentioned the Insurance Service Offices [ISO] inspection that will occur soon. He said they will come in and evaluate the Fire Department on operations to provide information to insurance companies to use for their rates. He said it is an intense process gathering the paperwork and expects the inspection to begin at the end of February or beginning of March.

Mayor Hatter said some of the ISO information ties back to homeowner's insurance rates. Chief Schewe confirm, saying a lot of demographic charges are determined based on the fire rating of the City on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the best in the nation. He said it analyzes everything from the way dispatch sends calls to waterflow availability and deployment speed.

Chief Schewe announced there will be more Hoxworth blood drives this year and they will be announced on the website closer to the dates. He said they have appreciated their time here in Fort Wright and they always report back with a great review. Mayor Hatter asked Council and residents to share the information about the blood drives once it is published to get more people to attend. He said Hoxworth appreciates the City's response and turnout and supplies are down because of Covid. Mayor Hatter said this is another testament to the great people in the City of Fort Wright.

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

Police Department – Captain Jonathan Colwell mentioned the new Police Officer who will be starting on February 16th. He also discussed the four officers who were chosen to attend the Presidential Inauguration in Washington, DC, on January 20, 2021. He said the officers were taken care of well and

the event was an interesting way to experience Washington. He said the Police Department will also be receiving their second round of Covid-19 vaccines the week of February 8th.

Mayor Hatter said the officers who attended Washington, DC, for the inauguration did so on funding from the federal government, at no cost to the City of Fort Wright's residents. He said a call went out to agencies across the nation and it was a great opportunity for the City's officers to see something not everyone can experience, and from a unique perspective.

Public Works – Mr. Bethell provided an update on the Amsterdam Road project, saying it is moving along, with most of the wall having backfill and catch basins added. He said the storm system infrastructure is almost complete below Morris Road and fully complete between Morris and Redwood. He said he hopes the weather cooperates so that the contractors can start on curbs and pavement soon.

Mr. Bethell said his team has dealt with a few plowable snow events in the past week and are preparing for more this weekend. He said there had been some equipment issues but those are resolved. Mr. Bethell said the City currently has 113 tons of salt in stock and is having 150 tons delivered tomorrow.

Mayor Hatter brought up the Amsterdam Road Project, saying it has gone well overall despite a few setbacks, including an old septic tank that had been abandoned since the 1960s. He asked Mr. Bethell if the project is still ahead of schedule. Mr. Bethell said it is ahead of schedule, but they are cautious because of weather. Mayor Hatter asked if the road could be open by July, and Mr. Bethell said that is the hope.

Mayor Hatter discussed the ongoing construction on Amsterdam Road and the surrounding projects, saying he knows people have expressed concern with many projects happening at the same time. He said he has received a few complaints about the Fort Henry Road SD1 [Sanitation District No. 1 of Northern Kentucky] project, and said that other than moving equipment the inconvenience level is very low with that project. Mayor Hatter reminded residents that there is no City money being spent on these projects and the City cannot control other entity projects, including the SD1 project and Bromley-Crescent Springs Road. He said a grant became available to do the City's stretch of Amsterdam Road and, at \$3 million, it is the largest road project in the history of Fort Wright, as well as the most significant. He asked residents to continue to be patient. Councilman Feinauer commented on the amount of equipment he has seen in the City and said he always sees them moving and working.

Ms. Bailey announced that bids will be opened on February 19th for the Fort Henry Stabilization Project and the City is also going to be sending out for bids for the upcoming Redwood and Birchwood Street Project. She said she hopes for those bids to be presented for the next Council meeting. Mayor Hatter discussed the five-year rolling street program, saying halfway through the engineers reevaluate the City's needs. He said Fort Wright spends approximately \$600,000 per year on streets, putting the City near the top for spending on city streets in Kenton County. He said he knows that Redwood has needed help for a long time and Birchwood will be a big project, but it will be nice once it is all complete, though it will be inconvenient while it is in progress.

Councilman Wessels asked Mr. Bethell to discuss with PDS [Planning and Development Services of Kenton County] updating their spreadsheets to remove properties that have complied with requests. He also asked about an update regarding KLC [Kentucky League of Cities] getting legislation changed

regarding habitual zoning violations. Ms. Bailey said KLC is asking for an update to Bill 150 because of confusion on code enforcement and most cities are in favor. She said she has not heard any updates.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Employee Recognitions/Special Thank You's – Mayor Hatter read a Thank You to Officer Ben Wiesner from a resident. He also mentioned the Kenton County Public Library's StoryWalk event held at the City Administration Building for the last couple weeks. Ms. Bailey said the Library placed signs that told the "Cat's Colors" story and there was an accompanying activity book. She said the Library has reported that the event was successful.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Witt – She said the plans are in the works for a Clean Up Fort Wright Day in April. She said last year's event was cancelled because of the pandemic, but she thinks it can be done safely and that it is a great way to get residents involved. She thanked Mr. Bethell and the Public Works Department for their hard work in keeping the City clean.

Councilman Feinauer -- He wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day and hoped that everyone is staying safe.

Councilman Wall – He expressed condolences to the family of Mason County Judge-Executive Joseph Pfeffer, who died on February 1st and was a close friend of his.

Mayor Hatter – He thanked the Optical Department at the Fort Wright Walmart for fixing his glasses last weekend. He also said the Fort Wright Garden Club reached out to him about doing a Plant Swap again, which he thinks can be done safely. Councilwoman Witt said the Garden Club is looking to rent a tent or possibly set up in the Fire Department bay to do a one-way traffic set-up.

Mayor Hatter addressed snow emergencies, saying he hates to implement them because of the inconvenience they cause to residents who have few parking options. He said if the snowfall is significant then residents should watch the news, check email, and check social media as the City will try to convey the news as quickly as possible. He asked residents to move their cars off the road if they can to make it easier to plow.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Hatter requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session under KRS 61.810 (1)(f), discussions or hearings which might lead to the appointment, discipline, or dismissal of an individual employee, member, or student without restricting that employee's, member's, or student's right to a public hearing if requested. 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 Wall	Yes

Councilman Wessels Yes

Councilman Witt Yes

MOTION CARRIED

The Council Meeting was adjourned to Executive Session at 7:12 PM.

The Council Meeting was reopened to the public at 7:31 PM.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

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

The Council Meeting adjourned at 7:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Hatter, Mayor

Attest:



Maura Russell
City Clerk