



City of Fort Wright

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

City of Fort Wright Council Meeting Wednesday, February 7, 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 Captain Jonathan Colwell
Public Works Director Jeff Bethell
City Clerk Maura Russell

CITIZEN COMMENTS/GUESTS

Jason Worms – 433 Pickett Drive – Mr. Worms inquired on the status of the Fairness Ordinance. Mayor Hatter advised that due to illness and scheduling conflicts there has been a delay, but the working group did meet last night [Tuesday, February 6th] to begin reviewing various ordinances around Northern Kentucky.

APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES

Councilman Wessels made a motion to approve the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday, January 3, 2024. 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

Councilman Abeln made a motion to approve the minutes of the Caucus Meeting held on Wednesday, January 17, 2024. 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 Wessels made a motion to amend the agenda to include discussion about three Kentucky House Bills, HB61, HB62, and HB111. 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

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

Municipal Order 01-2024 – Appointing Tom Litzler as TBNK Representative – Mayor Hatter advised Tom Litzler has agreed to serve another term as the City’s representative to the Telecommunications Board of Northern Kentucky [TBNK]. He said Mr. Litzler has served on this Board for decades and has agreed to one final term. Ms. Bailey thanked Mr. Litzler for his willingness to serve again.

Councilman Wessels made a motion to approve Municipal Order 01-2024, a Municipal Order of the City Council of the City of Fort Wright in Kenton County, Kentucky, reappointing Tom Litzler as the City’s representative to the Telecommunications Board of Northern Kentucky. 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

Municipal Order 02-2024 – Declaring Surplus Property for Disposal – Ms. Bailey said the items for disposal are mainly from the Public Works Department and have been phased out with the recent purchase of new vehicles and equipment. She said all items of value will be posted on GovDeals for auction.

Councilman Collins made a motion to approve Municipal Order 02-2024, a Municipal Order of the City Council of the City of Fort Wright in Kenton County, Kentucky, declaring surplus property and authorizing disposal of such property by destruction and/or recycling. 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

Municipal Order 03-2024 – Appointing Frank Henn as Code Enforcement Representative – Mayor Hatter thanked Mr. Henn for his willingness to continue serving as the City’s representative to the Kenton County Joint Code Enforcement Board.

Councilwoman Witt made a motion to approve Municipal Order 03-2024, a Municipal Order of the City Council of the City of Fort Wright in Kenton County, Kentucky, reappointing Frank Henn as the City's representative to the Kenton County Joint Code Enforcement Board. 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

Discussion on three Kentucky House Bills: HB61, HB62, and HB111 – Mayor Hatter said there have been three bills introduced in the Kentucky House that will impact the Homestead Exemption Act and the tax revenue the City sees from property taxes.

Mayor Hatter summarized each bill, saying House Bill 61 raises the exemption amount to up to \$125,000 of the value of the property; House Bill 62 removes the base \$6,500 exemption, which has adjusted every year to be currently \$46,350, to allow the General Assembly to set the rate; and House Bill 111 would freeze property values for those age 65 and over. Mayor Hatter said he appreciates that legislators are trying to make things more affordable, but any of these changes will take a lot of money away from the City, impacting services to residents and businesses. He said he is asking Council to approve a Resolution to oppose these three bills as they currently stand.

Councilman Wessels agreed with Mayor Hatter and made a motion to approve Resolution 03-2024, a Resolution of the City of Fort Wright in Kenton County, Kentucky, opposing any and all resolutions impacting homestead exemptions. 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

After discussion, Councilman Wessels made a motion to amend the Resolution to oppose any changes to the current structure of the homestead exemption program. 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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee – Councilman Wessels – Councilman Wessels said RedTree Investment Group will be

presenting recommendations for expiring bonds to the Committee soon. He said after that meeting the Finance Committee will make a recommendation on the next steps to Council.

Community Improvement Committee – Councilwoman Witt – Councilwoman Witt said the Committee will be meeting in two weeks to set a new agenda.

CAO REPORT

Ms. Bailey said the migration of the phone system is mostly complete, but there are still a few issues to work through.

Ms. Bailey reviewed the OSHA abatement process has begun and each department will be working on implementing recommendations.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Administration – Ms. Russell advised there is only 1.46% remaining to collect on the 2023 real property tax bills and 1.17% remaining on the tangible property tax bills.

Mayor Hatter thanked residents and business owners for continuing to pay their taxes on time.

Fire/ALS Department – Chief Schewe reported on a recent house fire on Rosa Avenue, saying there was one injury to a firefighter, and they will be on light duty for a while. He also said they will be interviewing for additional part-time firefighters soon.

Police Department – Captain Colwell had no report.

Ms. Bailey added that the Fire and Police departments had completed annual reports of the activity in their departments for 2023, with snapshots of activity and call volume. She said these will be a great resource for residents to see the work the departments are doing for them.

Chief Schewe added that there is mention in his department's report of the prescription drop box in the lobby of the City Building. He and Mayor Hatter reminded residents that the drop box is available for residents and keeps pills out of the water supply, landfill, and the hands of children and those who should have them.

Public Works Department – Mr. Bethell said there will be a bid opening on Thursday, February 15th, for the parking lot repaving project, and the results will be presented for review at the March Council Meeting.

Mr. Bethell congratulated employee Jacob Key and his wife on the arrival of their newest child.

Ms. Bailey added that the Kentucky Department of Transportation has advised they will be replacing the traffic signals at the intersection at Kyles Lane and Highland Pike, at the City Building entrance.

Legal Counsel – Mr. Theissen had no report.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Employee Recognitions/Special Thank You's – Mayor Hatter read from a thank you note to Captain Colwell and Officer Brad Keller.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

There were no Council Comments.

Mayor Hatter discussed the speeding and traffic violation issues that have been brought to his attention in the last few months, saying he has heard many concerns. He reminded residents that the Police Department has 13 officers, including a working Chief, and went on 9,200 calls in 2023, so they are a limited resource that is in high demand. Mayor Hatter announced that communication will be coming to say that he is ordering the Police Department to take a more rigorous approach to traffic enforcement, to ramp up efforts to enforce traffic violations.

Mayor Hatter added that this will not be a revenue generator for the City, as Kentucky requires 95% of the money from tickets for moving state violations to go to Frankfort and the remainder comes to the City. He said last year the City received \$9,500.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Wall made 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. 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

The Council Meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 6:51 PM.

The Council Meeting was reopened to the public at 7:20 PM.

Mr. Theissen completed the first reading of Ordinance 01-2024, an Ordinance of the City of Fort Wright, in Kenton County, Kentucky, adding a new Section 110.17 to the Business Regulations of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Fort Wright imposing an administrative hold on issuance or renewal of any license, permit or other approval if there are unpaid taxes, fines or other violations.

Councilman Collins made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 01-2024. Councilman Abeln made a second. Ms. Baily called the roll.

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

Mr. Theissen completed the first reading of Ordinance 02-2024, an Ordinance of the City of Fort Wright, in Kenton County, Kentucky, amending the Fort Wright Zoning Ordinance Chapter 112 entitled Alcoholic

Beverages, Section 112.99, entitled "Penalty", adding a provision authorizing the City to revoke or suspend an alcohol license for non-payment of taxes and other legal violations.

Councilwoman Witt made a motion approve the first reading of Ordinance 02-2024. Councilman Wessels made a second. Ms. Bailey 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 Abeln made a motion to adjourn the Council Meeting. Councilman Wall made a second. All in favor.

The Council Meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Hatter, Mayor

Attest:


Maura Russell, City Clerk