



# City of Fort Wright

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## City of Fort Wright Caucus Meeting Wednesday, May 15, 2024 – 6:00 PM

### CALL TO ORDER

The Caucus 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	Present
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 Attorney Tim Theissen  
City Clerk Maura Russell  
City Engineer Mark Brueggemann

### CITIZEN COMMENTS/GUESTS

Kathleen Romero – 113 Ridgemont Avenue – Ms. Romero inquired on the status of Battery Hooper Park as she says there are pink marking flags near the shelter. Mr. Bethell said those flags were not in place earlier this day.

### ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

**Steve Arlinghaus, Executive Director, Housing Authority of Covington** – Mr. Arlinghaus reviewed the operations of the Housing Authority of Covington, saying they are not a department or agency of the city of Covington, but a quasi-governmental agency that was formed to allow public housing into Kenton County in the 1930s. He said at the time the only city in the county that was allowed to have public housing was Covington, thus the name of the agency was determined from that.

Mr. Arlinghaus also explained the background of the city of Covington, HAC, and Fort Wright, saying the City of Fort Wright has had an auto-renewing interlocal agreement with the city of Covington since 1983 to have them administer the “Section 8” program. He said the only change is that the city of Covington is now going to have HAC take over operation of the Section 8 program, which means Fort Wright will need to enter into an agreement with HAC to administer/operate the Section 8 program.

Ms. Bailey thanked Mr. Arlinghaus for explaining the process. She said the new interlocal agreement will be on the June Council Meeting agenda.

**Towne Property Request for IRBs for Wright's Point Project** – Jim Parsons, Partner at KMK Law and Bond Counsel for Towne Properties, and Scott Arentsen, Towne Properties CFO, addressed Council requesting an industrial revenue bond (IRB) for the expansion of Wright's Point Apartments off Highland Avenue. Mr. Parsons said the City would only be issuing the bond and no debt or costs would be incurred by or become the responsibility of the City. He said Kenton County School Board and Kenton County Fiscal Court must also approve this request, but he felt they would be in favor.

Mr. Parsons said Towne Properties agreed to the following conditions in the proposal for this request: the City will issue IRBs for the project to exempt the project from real property taxes for a 30-year term, subject to the payment of Pilot Taxes to the City of 90% of the real property taxes that would have been generated had IRBs not been issued; the developer will request from the County approval of a 90% Pilot payment to the County and will negotiate a Pilot payment with the Kenton County School District; the issuance of IRBs will be subject to the approval of an Agreement In-Lieu of Taxes by the City, County, and School District; the IRBs will not be a debt of the City and the City will have no responsibility for the payments of the IRBs; all costs related to the issuance of the IRBs will be paid by the developer; the use of IRBs will only impact real property taxes, but subject to the Agreement In-Lieu of Taxes, the City, County, and School District will receive 100% of occupational taxes, insurance taxes, tangible taxes, utility taxes, and other taxes or fees generated by the project.

After discussion, Council requested 100% of Pilot taxes, to which Mr. Parsons and Mr. Arentsen were agreeable. There was also discussion on the provisions of the IRB statutes, on which Mr. Theissen agreed to review to confirm if this project would be allowable. Mr. Parsons said many other jurisdictions in Kenton County have approved IRBs for residential, non-industrial, non-city center projects. Councilmembers requested additional time to consider the positives and negatives of issuing IRBs and the impact they have on other areas.

There was also discussion about potentially changing the intersection of Farrell Drive and Kyles Lane, which would require cooperation from the City of Covington and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. Mr. Brueggemann agreed to review some options on improving the intersection and keeping those review costs under \$1,000.

**Traffic Analysis of Kyles & Highland Intersection and Traffic Flow (CT Consultants)** – Mr. Brueggemann presented options for improving the intersection at Kyles Lane and Highland Avenue. After review of multiple options, Council requested a cost analysis of adding a northbound right turn lane at Kyles/Highland, restriping Highland Avenue from south of Werner Drive through the intersection at Kyles Lane to provide one lane north and one lane south, with a center left turn lane, and changing the south end of Lorup Drive to a cul-de-sac.

It was confirmed that once plans and a cost analysis are ready, a meeting would be scheduled with KYTC District 6, Kenton County officials, and elected state representatives.

**Traffic Analysis of Kyles & Dixie Intersection and Traffic Flow (CT Consultants)** – Mr. Brueggemann said the initial traffic signal changes from southbound Dixie Highway onto Kyles Lane caused a significant amount of delay because of timing. He said those issues have been improved with signal updating. Mr. Brueggemann suggested updating the pavement markings and adding lane delineator posts to keep traffic turning from north- and southbound Dixie Highway onto Kyles Lane in their appropriate lanes.

After discussion, Council agreed that the priority would be the Kyles Lane/Highland Avenue project and that would be proposed first.

**Open Records Update – City Attorney Tim Theissen** – Mr. Theissen advised elected officials and department heads that open records requests for conversations on personal devices, including privately-owned cell phones or personal email addresses, can be fulfilled, meaning those records can be made public. He recommended all communication regarding City business be done through City-provided email addresses only. Mr. Theissen advised this does include any texts that Councilmembers receive from residents with City-based questions.

Mayor Hatter added that he would like to see the development of a record retention policy based on state law.

**FWPD Hiring Update/Plan** – Mayor Hatter said there have been multiple conversations with Chief Butler and Kenton County Commonwealth's Attorney Rob Sanders regarding gaps that are created without a Detective position in the Police Department. He said ideally the department would have a full-time detective to provide continuity on investigations, while also doing other police work when needed.

Chief Butler added that it is also a customer service issue because the current schedule of the officers has natural gaps where they are off work and it can become difficult to maintain communication, complete interviews in a timely manner, and do the other investigative work that comes with crime. Chief Butler also said there are not a lot of opportunities for mobility in a 13-person department, which leads to officers starting here then leaving for other agencies offering other types of work. He also said the additional training opportunities would lead to more well-rounded officers.

Ms. Bailey said the approval of the role would come through budgeting and must be included in the personnel classification ordinance that is passed in June each year.

**FWFD Hiring Plan/Mutual Aid Update** – Mayor Hatter said he and Ms. Bailey and Chief Schewe recently met with Fort Mitchell's leadership to discuss an imbalance in mutual aid between the cities. He said this led to reviews of all mutual aid, both received by and given to Fort Wright. Chief Schewe said sometimes the mutual aid comes in when Fort Wright is responding to a different agency's request for mutual aid.

Ms. Bailey advised the Fire Department is currently working toward three goals: having five people on every shift, which would include two full-time and three part-time firefighter/paramedics; adding the second ambulance online as often as possible to decrease the burden on Fort Mitchell; and addressing zoning with Kenton County's dispatch to ensure discrepancies are addressed.

**City Attorney Selection Process/Update** – Mayor Hatter said two attorneys have been interviewed for the role of City Attorney – John Brooking and Daniel Hunt. He thanked those Councilmembers who were able to attend the interviews and advised he would be deciding by Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Upcoming Election Reminders** – Ms. Bailey reminded Council that the deadline to register is June 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM. She also advised Primary Elections will be held at Fort Wright Civic Club at 115 Kennedy Road on Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, and permission has been given to use the facility for the November general election.

**Public Works Staffing Update** – Mayor Hatter advised one of the Public Works Laborers has left the City for a new job. He said it will take outside-the-box thinking to handle the workload of the Public Works Department, including outsourcing grass cutting so that the department can focus on more high-value projects.



**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

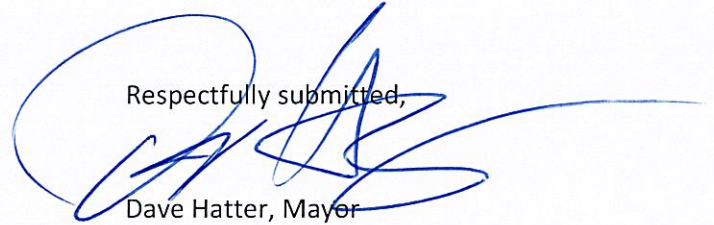
There was no need for an Executive Session

**ADJOURNMENT OF THE CAUCUS MEETING**

Councilwoman Witt made a motion to adjourn the Caucus Meeting. Councilman Collins made a second. All voting in favor.

The Caucus Meeting was adjourned at 9:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Dave Hatter, Mayor.

Dave Hatter, Mayor

Attest:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Maura Russell, City Clerk.

Maura Russell, City Clerk