



City of Fort Wright

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

City of Fort Wright Caucus Meeting Wednesday, August 21, 2024 – 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The Caucus Meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM by Mayor Dave Hatter following the close of the Special Council Meeting.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Traffic Analysis/Cost of Kyles/Highland Intersection Improvements (CT Consultants) – Marty Hellmann, Project Manager with CT Consultants, presented options for improving traffic congestion and accidents on Highland Pike, noting that everything presented is purely a suggestion and is subject to the approval of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. He said the company is proposing to change the left uphill lane into a center bi-directional turn lane. Mr. Hellmann also presented the option of aligning Lorup Avenue and Beaumont Court by acquiring through purchase the property at 504 Beaumont Court. He said the downside is the City would have to purchase the property and tear down the home, but there would be minimal impact to the adjacent properties.

Mr. Hellmann also presented suggestions for updating the interchange at Kyles Lane and Highland Pike, specifically the approach at Old Kyles Lane. He said the best suggestion is to create a dedicated right turn lane that cuts out, forcing people to consciously enter the turning lane. Mr. Hellmann presented other options that were not recommended by CT Consultants because of their impact to neighboring streets like Ashlawn Place and forcing traffic to cross over at certain points.

Mr. Hellmann advised the estimated costs for the lane reconfiguration, addition of a turn lane, and realignment of Beaumont Court would be in the \$1.2 million range. Mayor Hatter said that is a large number, but the traffic and safety improvements would not be felt only by Fort Wright residents, but by the entire region. He said because of this regional impact he would hope KYTC and the state legislation would be willing to fiscally support this project. Mayor Hatter asked Mr. Hellmann to pause their planned discussions with KYTC until he and Ms. Bailey have had an opportunity to reach out to the City's representatives.

2025 Street Program – Mr. Hellmann advised that costs have gone up significantly since the last review of the Street Program in 2021. He provided the proposed work at General Drive and Pickett Drive as an example, saying the 2021 estimate was \$473,000 and the new estimate is \$827,000. After discussion on the best ways to get the lowest prices for the work, Council requested that the bidding process be separated out for each street.

SD1 Tank Expansion Project – Mr. Hellmann presented information regarding an upcoming Sanitation District of Northern Kentucky project that would add a storage tank on their property near Interstate 275, south of the Interstate bridge and west of the railroad tracks. He said the tank is proposed to be 60 to 75 feet tall, about as tall as the I-275 bridge. Mr. Hellmann said this tank is going to be used to store sanitary sewer material until it can be pumped up to a processing plant.

Mr. Hellmann said part of the work will include a 60" pipe that is being run up along Madison Pike and will need to run under the Dudley Bridge. There was discussion on SD1 possibly taking ownership of the Bridge, but the

state will need to be involved as they are the abutting property owners. It was agreed that Mr. Brooking would work on gathering the information needed to determine how to close the right-of-way and transfer ownership of the bridge. Council also agreed that SD1 could paint the tank sand or a similar color.

Joint & Crack Sealing Program – Mr. Hellmann said joint and crack sealing streets should happen every three to five years and CT Consultants is recommending implementing a rotating program that would divide the City into five segments. He said based on previous bids the yearly cost would be about \$150,000. Mr. Bethell said the City has previously spent between \$10,000 and \$30,000 per year.

Mayor Hatter suggested approving the full \$150,000 to then be adjusted as necessary as this will preserve the longevity of the streets. He added that does not want this taken from the existing Street Program budget, but its own expense.

Speed Sign Locations – Mayor Hatter advised Council that the speed signs approved for purchase have come in and that these are good reminders to slow down, but also will collect data on potential speeding problem areas. Chief Colwell asked Council where they would like the two units, one which is on a trailer and very mobile and the other is semi-permanent and should stay in place for six months or so to prevent early aging.

Council provided a few options for placement, including Amsterdam Road, Highland Avenue near Bluegrass Swim Club, East Henry Clay Avenue, Mount Vernon Drive, and Dixie Highway near St. Agnes Church and School. Chief Colwell was advised by Council to use his best judgement in placing the monitoring devices.

Kenton County Navigator Program – Ms. Bailey said the Kenton County Navigator Program is a program of the Kenton County Fiscal Court which provides social workers on-call for certain police calls. She said KCFC has requested each city's opioid settlement funds be turned over to them as a contribution to support the program. Ms. Bailey said there is no initial dollar figure required, and no plan for communities that do not contribute funds, though it is believed they are still able to receive the social worker services. She said the City has received approximately \$40,000 in opioid settlement funding and could potentially receive more, but the City experienced a significant impact from the opioid crisis and the funds are being used to compensate for the additional strain on services provided at that time.

Chief Colwell said the program is completely managed by the Kenton County Police Department and any drug-related calls are routed to them and a worker is assigned for later follow up. He said he has not heard any feedback on the program and Fort Wright has not yet used the service.

After discussion, it was agreed that additional information is needed to understand the funding resources. Mayor Hatter requested a representative of the program attend an upcoming meeting to provide additional information.

COFW Building/Property Assessment Project – Mayor Hatter said Council will need to decide what to do with the Fort Wright Civic Club and its property, but he feels it is probably not feasible to fix it up. He would like to move forward with getting a full picture of the value of that property and the South Hills Civic Club and Battery Hooper Park. Council agreed to move forward with property assessments.

Councilwoman Witt advised the Community Improvement Committee has been discussing parks for a long time. She provided a spreadsheet of parks and public areas in the City and their current designated use and maintenance requirements, along with possible uses. She said information was gathered from residents via social media, in-person contacts, and surveys.

Councilwoman Witt presented several questions for Council to consider around parks, including cost for facilities, maintenance, insurance, income generation, and the possible expectation of City-sponsored events and activities. She said there is not a budget for a director for special events and if a larger event center is created, there may be an expectation that the City creates community events on a regular or coordinated basis.

Mayor Hatter said he would like to see the Fort Wright Civic Club turned into something more upscale and then tear down South Hills Civic Club, but he is against the idea of hiring event planners or other personnel because of the costs to hire and retain. He reminded Council that once the Kyles Lane bridge is complete, the City will have significant cost increases for upkeep of the area. He said is all in on trying to do something awesome, but he does not want to run or plan events or manage the space.

Public Works Garage – Additional Door Access – Mr. Bethell presented information about creating an access door into the newly acquired space in the Public Works Garage. Ms. Bailey added that ARPA funds will be used for this project, and she reminded Council that they were supportive of this project during budgeting time.

Mr. Bethell said the cost of the proposal is \$5,800. Council did not object to moving forward.

St. Agnes Oktoberfest – Ms. Bailey said St. Agnes has again requested Police Department support for traffic control for their event from September 27th to 29th. Council confirmed no issues with providing support.

Mayor Hatter added that the City of Fort Wright will again be participating in the Veterans Day Ceremony at Highland Cemetery on Sunday, November 10th.

FY 2024-2025 Property Tax Rates – There was discussion on the property value increase that has occurred in Fort Wright due to the Kenton County Property Valuation Administrator's reevaluation, which occurs every four years. Mayor Hatter said the property values in Fort Wright increased over \$130 million to \$760 million – a 20 percent increase. He said it is good news that values have gone up, but this will cause homeowners to see an increase in property taxes unless the City is able to cut the tax rate substantially.

Mayor Hatter reviewed the 25-year tax rate chart showing the ebb and flow of the City's tax rates over time. He said his position is to keep the tax rates as low as possible while still covering costs, which would mean a slight reduction in the tax rate for 2024-2025.

It was decided that the Finance Committee would review additional information, including payroll tax income and insurance premium tax income, to ensure a complete picture when establishing the 2024-2025 tax rates.

Ms. Bailey advised the interest rate dropping will cause the City's accounts not locked in to lose investment income, so that will need to be accounted for.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Mr. Bethell advised the work on George Huser Drive is almost finished and Fort Henry Drive should be complete within four weeks.

Councilman Wessels and Mayor Hatter thanked Chief Colwell and the Police Department for their assistance with a situation.

Ms. Bailey advised this is Ms. Russell's final meeting at Fort Wright.

Councilwoman Witt announced the Fall Community Clean Up will be Saturday, October 12th.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

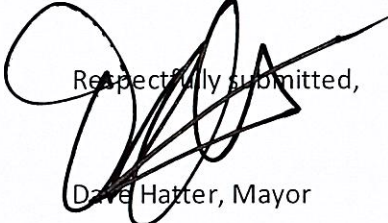
There was no need for an Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE CAUCUS MEETING

Councilman Wall made a motion to adjourn the Caucus Meeting. Councilman Collins made a second. Ms. Russell called the roll.

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

The Caucus Meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Hatter, Mayor

Attest:


Kerrie Holland, City Clerk