



# City of Fort Wright

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## City of Fort Wright Special Council Meeting Wednesday, November 18, 2020 – 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 Administrative Officer Jill Bailey called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Absent
Councilman Feinauer	Here
Councilman Wall	Here
Councilman Weber	Here
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 Chief Ed Butler  
Public Works Director Jeff Bethell  
Treasurer/Senior Deputy Clerk Susan Ellis

### CITIZEN COMMENTS/GUESTS

There were no citizen comments.

### APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES

Councilman Feinauer made a motion to approve the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday, October 7, 2020. Councilman Weber made a second. CAO Jill Bailey called the roll.

Councilman Feinauer	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Weber	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

Councilman Wessels made a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on Wednesday, October 21, 2020. Councilman Feinauer made a second. CAO Jill Bailey called the roll.

Councilman Feinauer    Yes  
Councilman Wall        Yes  
Councilman Weber      Yes  
Councilman Wessels    Yes  
Councilwoman Witt     Yes

MOTION CARRIED

Councilman Wessels made a motion to approve the minutes of the Caucus Meeting held on Wednesday, October 21, 2020. Councilman Weber made a second. City Clerk Maura Russell called the roll.

Councilman Feinauer    Yes  
Councilman Wall        Yes  
Councilman Weber      Yes  
Councilman Wessels    Yes  
Councilwoman Witt     Yes

MOTION CARRIED

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Resolution 19-2020 – Authorizing the Transfer of Control of Cincinnati Bell Inc. and Cincinnati Bell Extended Territories LLC to Red Fiber Parent LLC and RF Merger Sub Inc.** – Mayor Hatter said that Tom Litzler attended the last Council Meeting to present the information on the sale of Cincinnati Bell to Red Fiber. A motion was made by Councilman Wessels to approve the sale on behalf of the City of Fort Wright. Councilwoman Witt made a second. CAO Jill Bailey called the roll.

Councilman Feinauer    Yes  
Councilman Wall        Yes  
Councilman Weber      Yes  
Councilman Wessels    Yes  
Councilwoman Witt     Yes

MOTION CARRIED

Councilman Weber requested the document be updated to reflect the attestation as it currently reflects that City Clerk Maura Russell will attest, but she is absent for the meeting. Ms. Bailey said she will make the update.

**RedTree Investment Services and Investment Policy Update** - Ms. Bailey advised Council that the contract for RedTree Investment Group and the City's Investment Policy is still in progress. Mayor Hatter tabled the discussion for the next Council Meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Fiscal Year 19-20 Audit Presentation (John Chamberlin, Van Gorder Walker)** – John Chamberlin, Partner and CPA at Van Gorder Walker & Co., thanked Council and the Mayor for the opportunity to work with the City of Fort Wright and present the financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. He expressed appreciation to Ms. Bailey, Treasurer/Senior Deputy Clerk Susan Ellis, Ms. Russell, and City Accountant Ben Harrison for their assistance leading up to and during the firm's visit. Mr. Chamberlin said Council make a good decision on hiring Mr. Harrison as the part-time Accountant, saying he is doing a fantastic job. Mr. Chamberlin presented the following:

- Presented in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States (GAAP) and auditing standards generally accepted in the United States (GAAS)
- Issued an unmodified opinion, meaning that no modifications are required to the opinion and that they are stated fairly; highest opinion they can give
- There are no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control
- There are no instances of non-compliance with laws or grant, debt, or bond agreements, specifically, the City is fully compliant with KRS [Kentucky Retirement System] and CERS [County Employee Retirement System]
- There were three management comments; this is compared to two management comments in FY 2018-19 and seven in FY 18-19
  - Separation of the Capital Improvement Fund (already accomplished)
  - Maintenance of Capital Asset Register (Mr. Harrison is working on this item)
  - Revamp of account numbers (Ms. Bailey is working on this item)

Mr. Chamberlin noted that the City was very close to the threshold for a Federal audit, with expenses reaching \$734,600. He said the threshold is \$750,000 and the City was close because of money coming in for Federal road projects and CARES Act [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act] funding. Mayor Hatter commented that the City normally does not reach this level of expenditures.

Mr. Chamberlin advised that the City has approximately 18 months of cash on hand, where only three months is recommended. He also pointed out the general government expenditures increased 104% over the last fiscal year but that is due to a reclassification of funds from prior years. He noted that items like waste, streetlights, and building utilities were all reported in different areas previously and caused this increase. Councilwoman Witt asked if there were actual increases in any of those areas, or others within the general government expenditures, and Mr. Chamberlin said the reclassifications and movement do not allow for correct comparison. He also mentioned increases to Police and Fire Department spending, which Mayor Hatter attributed to increasing positions in those departments.

Mr. Chamberlin closed by saying the City is in good shape and this is generally a fantastic report.

Mayor Hatter commended staff for controlling expenses and looking for new revenue opportunities. He also pointed out that the City of Fort Wright has made a pension contribution every year for at least 20 years and the contribution has increased substantially, with the most recent increase being over \$767,000 from last year. He referenced one of Mr. Chamberlin's charts which showed the contribution amounts for the past five years. He said in 2015 the proportional share for the City was \$3 million and in 2020 the proportional share is \$9,586,298, despite the City sending almost \$1 million this year.

Mayor Hatter said he appreciated the work that Mr. Chamberlin and his team have done, as they have brought great insight to the City and staff have worked to incorporate his suggestions. He thanked Ms. Bailey, Ms. Ellis, Ms. Russell, Mr. Harrison, and staff for managing the City's money on a regular basis, reminding everyone that it is the residents' money being used. Mayor Hatter said all documents will be posted to the City's website once ready and he encouraged residents and business owners to review the financial documents to see where their money is being spent. He said the City is in the best financial shape since he started, and he thanked the Finance Committee, Council, and Staff for doing what they need to do to protect the City's assets.

Councilman Weber asked Mr. Chamberlin if he needed to review the forthcoming Investment Policy. Mr. Chamberlin said he does not need to approve it but will need to see it during next year's audit. Councilman Weber also mentioned the projection spreadsheet Mayor Hatter has created. Mr. Chamberlin said he is happy to look over it, but it may be best for Mr. Harrison to do the review.

**Fort Wright Gateway Proposal (Joey Hood, CT Consultants)** – Mayor Hatter introduced Joey Hood, with CT Consultants, saying he has been working with the Community Improvement Committee to improve the aesthetics of the City. Ms. Bailey said one of the items this Committee has been focused on is creating gateway opportunities, and Mr. Hood is at this meeting to provide those design plans created based on input from the Committee.

Mr. Hood said gateways are a unique feature that create "Welcome to our Home" moments. He presented a full gateway family of signage for different entrances to the City, including major, city, and local gateways. He said the major gateways are the Interstate 71/75 and 275 interchanges, which are regional entrances for those coming from outside the City and the state, city gateways are those on major roadways like Dixie Highway coming from Covington and Fort Mitchell, and local gateways are those like Amsterdam Road.

Mr. Hood presented sign options and color palates, including plants, stonework, and materials that could be used. He said the major gateway at I-71/75 has preliminary approval by KYTC [Kentucky Transportation Cabinet]. He said the I-275 interchange has not yet been discussed with KYTC. Ms. Bailey commented, saying permission may take 30-45 days at the local level if no electric is needed, and it will be designed to breakaway if hit. Councilman Weber asked that the City's insurance company is consulted once final designs are chosen to review liability.

Mr. Hood was asked about lifespan, and he said it is situation dependent based on location, but he anticipates 10 – 15 years, with signs being replaceable if damaged or faded. Mayor Hatter commented on new signage placed by the city of Bromley, saying they have solar-powered lighting on their signs. Mr. Hood said that is possible for these, as is making them with a reflective material.

Mr. Hood discussed a beautification concept for the Walgreens corner, at Dixie Highway and Kyles Lane, saying a series of flowering trees and low plantings have been suggested. Councilman Feinauer mentioned the Madison Avenue median gateways and the potential for adding signage and later landscaping in those areas when time and money allow.

Mayor Hatter commented that overall, the plan looks good and he does not want to get involved in the details to allow the Community Improvement Committee to handle the project. He suggested, pending

expenses, having more signs and not less because branding is good. Ms. Bailey reminded Council that they have already allocated \$100,000 to this project and thinks it will come in under budget. She said the Committee would like Council to take action so that bids can be received in December and January and then permit applications and fabrication can begin for installation in April and landscaping in May.

Mayor Hatter requested a motion to allow staff to proceed with the expenditure of funds for the gateway project up to the budgeted \$100,000. Councilman Wessels made a motion and Councilman Feinauer made a second. CAO Jill Bailey called the roll.

Councilman Feinauer    Yes  
Councilman Wall        Yes  
Councilman Weber      Yes  
Councilman Wessels    Yes  
Councilwoman Witt     Yes

MOTION CARRIED

**Resolution 20-2020 – Recognizing the Retirement of Sergeant George Kreutzjans** – City Attorney Tim Theissen read the summary of the Resolution recognizing and honoring Sergeant George Kreutzjans, as he retired from his position with the Fort Wright Police Department effective October 31, 2020.

Councilman Feinauer said Sgt. Kreutzjans did a lot of good while he was with the Fort Wright Police Department and was well liked by residents and he is sad to see him go. Councilwoman Witt wished Sgt. Kreutzjans best of luck in his retirement. Mayor Hatter said Sgt. Kreutzjans is a Fort Wright resident and former Marine and thanked him for his service in the Marine Corps and his long, dedicated service to the residents of Fort Wright. He wished him a long, healthy, happy retirement. Councilman Wessels said Sgt. Kreutzjans was always good in the neighborhood with kids and saw him talking with residents and wished him luck.

Councilman Feinauer made a motion to approve Resolution 20-2020, honoring Sgt. Kreutzjans. Councilman Weber made a second. CAO Jill Bailey called the roll.

Councilman Feinauer    Yes  
Councilman Wall        Yes  
Councilman Weber      Yes  
Councilman Wessels    Yes  
Councilwoman Witt     Yes

MOTION CARRIED

**Resolution 21-2020 – Authorizing Disposition of Firearm to Sgt. Kreutzjans** – Mayor Hatter said this is long-standing tradition in the City to sell to the retiring Police Officer their firearm for \$1.00.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Witt to approve Resolution 21-2020, authorizing disposition of firearm. Councilman Feinauer made a second. CAO Jill Bailey called the roll.

Councilman Feinauer    Yes  
Councilman Wall        Yes  
Councilman Weber      Yes

Councilman Wessels Yes  
Councilwoman Witt Yes

MOTION CARRIED

**Resolution 22-2020 – Regarding Waiver of ABC Licensing Fees** – Mayor Hatter said the City was informed that the state of Kentucky, under the direction of Governor Andy Beshear, has waived these fees at the state level. Mayor Hatter suggested following suit to grant some relief to restaurants and other establishments to waive these fees at the local level.

Ms. Bailey said this would be waiving approximately \$7,000 in fees and this proposal is to waive all renewal fees for December 1, 2020, to November 30, 2021. She said this is only valid for one year and not applicable for new or temporary licenses and does not resolve delinquencies.

Councilman Wessels said he fully supports whatever Council can do to help. Mayor Hatter said he wants to provide any relief they can and reminded residents to continue patronizing these businesses to the extent their able to help them survive. He reminded residents that, aside from extraordinary grants received this year, approximately 60% of the City's revenue comes from business-related taxes and fees. He said the businesses need the City and the City needs the businesses, and this is a small step the City can take to help.

Councilman Weber made a motion to approve Resolution 22-2020, waiving ABC licensing fees.  
Councilman Wall made a second. CAO Jill Bailey called the roll.

Councilman Feinauer Yes  
Councilman Wall Yes  
Councilman Weber Yes  
Councilman Wessels Yes  
Councilwoman Witt Yes

MOTION CARRIED

**Executive Order 11-2020 – Appointing Councilman Bernie Wessels to OKI** – Councilman Feinauer made a motion to approve Executive Order 11-2020, appointing Wessels to OKI. Councilwoman Witt made a second. CAO Jill Bailey called the roll.

Councilman Feinauer Yes  
Councilman Wall Yes  
Councilman Weber Yes  
Councilman Wessels Yes  
Councilwoman Witt Yes

MOTION CARRIED

**Executive Order 12-2020 – Appointing Tom Litzler to TBNK** – Mayor Hatter said Mr. Litzler, a former Mayor of the City of Fort Wright, has served on the Telecommunications Board of Northern Kentucky for a long time and has graciously agreed to be reappointed.

Councilman Feinauer made a motion to approve Executive Order 12-2020, appointing Mr. Litzler to TBNK. Councilman Wall made a second. CAO Jill Bailey called the roll.

Councilman Feinauer Yes  
Councilman Wall Yes  
Councilman Weber Yes  
Councilman Wessels Yes  
Councilwoman Witt Yes

MOTION CARRIED

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Community Improvement Committee** - Chair Councilman Feinauer said once the gateway project winds down the Committee will begin working on other action items.

Councilman Weber, Councilman Wall, and Mayor Hatter each thanked the Community Improvement Committee for their work on the gateway project.

**Economic Development Committee** - Chair Councilman Abeln was not present for this meeting. Councilman Wessels said he has nothing to add at this time. He asked Ms. Bailey the status of the development plans for the car wash and Smoothie King. Ms. Bailey said the car wash is still working on plans but does not know if they have filed with PDS yet. She said Smoothie King is potentially moving to a different location in Fort Wright and may partner with another business in that venture.

**Finance Committee** - Chair Councilman Wessels said Ms. Bailey has been sending her credit card statements to the Finance Committee for review. Ms. Bailey said she does this for review and she reviews each staff member's credit card statement each month. Councilman Weber made a comment about online transfers have an exception to require two people to review. Ms. Bailey said those are restricted to only allow transfers between City accounts within Republic Bank and no other third-party accounts.

Councilman Weber mentioned the Investment Policy, saying RedTree suggested to pull some items out and those have been added to a second document.

Ms. Bailey said the City still has open accounts with BB&T, all accounts have been opened with Republic Bank except for the Emergency Fund Account. She said the courier service for cash deposits started today. Ms. Bailey said she is working on a Credit Card Policy to accompany the new Republic Bank credit cards and staff will have an acknowledgement to sign. She also said the collateralizing and insured sweep accounts are in place for CIP and Dixie/Kyles TIF, and she discussed with Mr. Harrison today getting those incorporated with the Sage software. Ms. Bailey also said the deposit software has been installed and training has occurred.

Councilman Weber asked how the interactions have been with Republic Bank for City staff. She said Tom Salinger, Lynne Cole, and Dawn Morris have been great to work with, as has Tricia Endress. She said they have been handholding through the transfer process, and she appreciates it. Ms. Ellis commented that some responses have been slow but there are a lot of questions and changes so that is to be expected.

Councilwoman Witt asked who approves the policies Ms. Bailey is writing. Ms. Bailey said they are sent to the Finance Committee for review. Councilman Wessels commented that once approved they can then be presented to Council. Councilwoman Witt requested that happen. Ms. Bailey said the Credit Card Policy will be reviewed by the Finance Committee and a Uniform Policy for Public Works and Police Department Tattoo/Piercing Policy will be reviewed by the Human Resources Committee, and then can be presented to Council.

**Human Resources Committee** - Chair Councilman Weber said the City has made an offer to one individual for the open Police Department position, and that person is going through the required testing and will move forward once they pass. He mentioned the Uniform Policy for the Public Works Department that Ms. Bailey is working on, saying this is good because the residents will see them and know they are working for the City, residents will feel safer because they can recognize City employees and it will reinforce the identity of Fort Wright. He said the Police Department Tattoo/Piercing Policy will also be reviewed soon.

#### **CAO REPORT**

Ms. Bailey said she is happy to answer questions regarding the written report she provided, but she has touched on most of those items so far.

#### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Fire/ALS Department** – Chief Schewe congratulated Councilmembers on their reelection. He said one full-time Firefighter had been on light duty because of an ankle injury but has been released and is now back on the 24-hour shift rotation. He also said the Department has restocked on PPE [personal protective equipment].

Mayor Hatter asked about the new ambulance and fire truck and Chief Schewe said there are no problems, and both are running great. He said there was an issue with the utility pickup truck hitting a fire hydrant, but it is still in service.

**Finance Department** – Ms. Ellis said there has been a lot of activity with the bank change and the change in procedures. She said she is working on reports to streamline some processes. She said tax bills went out on November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> and only five have been returned so far for address problems, which she worked hard to ensure were correct. Ms. Ellis said, at this point, 12% have been paid for a total of \$223,658. She said there has been no report from the lockbox but will be working on that tomorrow with Republic Bank. Ms. Ellis also mentioned the City is expecting approximately \$13,000 from Kentucky Emergency Management for COVID relief but is still working with them to finalize the refund.

Mayor Hatter reminded residents that tax bills have gone out and if they are not in an escrow situation that they should have received the statement. He said if they have not received it to contact the City. Mayor Hatter said all bills must be paid by December 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 PM and reminders will be sent via email and social media, as well as posted on the digital sign and the website.



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

**Police Department** – Chief Ed Butler commented on Sgt. Kreutzjans' retirement, recognizing his contributions to the Police Department and congratulating him. He said there is an offer out for the open position and Jason Millay has been promoted to the Sergeant position, effective November 1<sup>st</sup>. Chief Butler pointed out the uniform he was wearing, saying it is the new uniform with new patch and the Department switched last Monday.

Chief Butler mentioned the major event that occurred last Wednesday on the Brent Spence Bridge, saying traffic in the City was tied up for a while. He thanked Jeff Bethell and the Public Works Department for their help, saying they were out there with his officers directing traffic and assisting.

Chief Butler said the Department usually does a Shop With A Cop event but because of the pandemic is now planning a "Stuff The Cruiser" event instead. He said potential students and families from Fort Wright Elementary have been identified for assistance. He also the department is accepting donations if residents would like to help. Chief Butler said officers were able to attend an event on Veterans Day at Texas Roadhouse to greet veterans and hand out vouchers. He also said the FOP will be handing out boxed food on Saturday at Gateway Community and Technical College on Madison, and Fort Wright Police Officers will be assisting.

Chief Butler reminded residents to be vigilant and cautious because of home invasions and car thefts in the region, stretching from Burlington to Park Hills and Green Township. He said investigators are working on the situation but advised residents to not leave garage doors open and to report any suspicious activity.

Chief Butler closed by expressing his condolences to former Police Chief Mark Schworer whose mother passed away.

Mayor Hatter thanked Sgt. Kreutzjans for his many years of work for Fort Wright and congratulated now Sgt. Millay. He also mentioned the Kentucky law enforcement training system, saying the person who applied for and was offered the open position had been on a police force in Dearborn County, Indiana, but is being required to go through the Kentucky Police Academy as if he is a new recruit with no training. He said this is time consuming and expensive. Mayor Hatter said there has been discussion about how difficult it is to hire and retain good police officers in Kentucky and said he knows there are differences between jurisdictions and states that the new officer will need to learn, but he does not understand why the officer will need to go through basic training despite already being a police officer. Mayor Hatter said he intends to, and requests Councilmembers also, reach out to local representatives to discuss, and proposes Council pass a resolution at the next Council Meeting to be the official communication piece representing the City of Fort Wright on this matter. Mayor Hatter said it has never been more difficult or dangerous to be a police officer and the City has a lot of great officers who will eventually retire and will need to be replaced.

Councilman Wessels suggested reaching out to Senator Chris McDaniel about sponsoring legislation. He also asked Chief Butler if the state will shut down the Police Academy like it did at the beginning of the pandemic. Chief Butler said he was not sure but upon opening there were restrictions put in place and the Academy is working to get the recruits through who were postponed earlier this year. Councilman

Weber asked if there was any way to provide virtual classes to ease the in-person burden. Chief Butler said some classes may be able to present virtually but the objective with in-person class is to building culture and emphasize the seriousness of the job. He also said the situation with the new hire is that Indiana's police academy does not have as many hours as Kentucky's. He also agrees that things could be changed and improved if looked at objectively.

**Public Works** – Mr. Bethell reported that his team has been working on building maintenance and winterizing areas. They have also done some hot-patching, trimmed trees, bush hogged rights-of-way, and done some trash clean up. He said the wall on Amsterdam Road is now being backfilled, then storm sewer work will begin and last until February. He said curb work will potentially begin in March and pavement work will start in April, but this is all weather-dependent.

Mr. Bethell said test pours have been conducted on the Fort Henry project and he hopes to bid that project out in January for tentative construction in July. Councilman Feinauer asked about the test pours and Mr. Bethell said they were done on both sides of the guardrail to see how it handles on the downslope of the hill.

Mr. Bethell discussed the road construction on Amsterdam Road, saying when that begins they will start on the intersections of Amsterdam Road and General Drive and Amsterdam Road and Fort Henry Drive to get those areas opened up first, then the work on the Fort Henry wall will start.

Mr. Bethell also provided an update on the work on Highland Pike at the Fort Wright Nature Center, saying the pipe has flow and work will now be done to pull out the abandoned manholes and temporary lines. He said there will be restoration work and grading with winter wheat to keep soil from eroding and in the Spring topsoil, seed, and straw will be done. He also said the sidewalk would be done in the Spring so the land can settle appropriately.

## **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Employee Recognitions/Special Thank You's** – Mayor Hatter said there was a Thank You note sent in from a resident in response to Mr. Bethell's letter to residents in the East Henry Clay area about resurfacing.

Mayor Hatter reminded residents about tax bills and to let the City know if one was not received but should have been. He also had the following announcements:

Mayor Hatter thanked Councilwoman Witt and the Fort Wright Garden Club for donating the new tree on the front lawn of the City Administration Building. He said a Tree Lighting event will take place on December 12<sup>th</sup> with more information to come as the event gets closer.

Mayor Hatter said that Santa and Mrs. Claus will be visiting Fort Wright neighborhoods on December 12<sup>th</sup> with an escort by the Police and Fire Departments. He also mentioned Light Up Fort Wright, through which the City is encouraging joy with holiday decorations. He said all information will be available on social media, the digital sign in front of the City Administration Building, and via email to keep residents informed as events get closer and for potential changes.

## 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. A motion was made by Councilman Wessels. Councilman Feinauer made a second. CAO Jill Bailey called the roll.

Councilman Feinauer	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Weber	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

The Council Meeting was adjourned to Executive Session at 8:10 PM.

The Council Meeting was reopened to the public at 8:50 PM.

## ADJOURNMENT OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

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

The Council Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Hatter, Mayor

Attest:



Maura Russell  
City Clerk