

MINUTES
City of Geneva
Council Meeting
August 12, 2024
6:00 p.m.

President John Barbo opened the Council meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call – John Barbo, Robert Rosebrugh, Jeffrey Griffiths, James Baehr, William Baker, Dana Schenk, John Travis

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was said and prayer was offered by Phyllis Dunlap, Clerk of Council.

Motion was made by James Baehr to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2024, regular council meeting, seconded by Jeffrey Griffiths. Roll call, 6 yeas, (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Baehr, Baker, Travis), 1 Abstention (Schenk). Motion duly passed.

Presentations – Legal Department, Gary Pasqualone, Esq. Presenting

Mr. Pasqualone handles both civil and criminal cases for the city.

The majority of the cases Mr. Pasqualone handles are traffic cases, most are related to driving with a suspended driver’s license. If the person obtains a valid license prior to the case being heard, there is no operator license charge, and no points are charged against the license. There is a mandatory fine, however.

On the criminal side, the majority are domestic violence cases. Mr. Pasqualone tries to work those out rather than taking them to court.

Pre-trials are held on a weekly basis.

Citizens:

Ron Stetler, Post Commander
VFW, Depot Street, Geneva, Ohio

The flooding on Depot Street has become more frequent this year causing damage to the front door of the VFW. The water is coming up to the base of the building and coming inside of the building. There has been wave action problems up against the building. This has been going on for decades.

Mr. Stetler has volunteers ready to sandbag down the sidewalk. A new front door has been installed and is already beginning to rust.

The VFW is asking for consideration to allow them to sandbag to protect the building.

The flooding is affecting the businesses. The VFW has actively put a plan together. This is one of the targeted areas they are addressing within the plan. There have been four 50-year storms in the last two months.

Mr. Varckette stated that the city has been awarded a \$2.6 million grant to do a number of upgrades in the downtown area. Part of that plan including the paving and upgrading of the Depot lot. It does not address flooding. The city is actively working with its consultants to resolve this problem.

Mr. Stetler stated that addressing the problem could take a year or two. The VFW would like a variance, temporary relief, to set up sandbags. The water stays for up to two to three hours. Water comes in the door. One person slipped and fell getting out of the building.

Mr. Varckette stated that Council has invested in building a stormwater master plan which will create a priority list and guiding document on where to start.

George Yankee
7 E. Liberty Street aka 9 E. Liberty Street, Geneva Ohio

Mr. Yankee's property at 9 E. Liberty Street was vandalized on July 31st. The 4 windows in the back were smashed in, part of the door kicked in. Officer Smith took pictures. Last year on June 14th, the front of the house was vandalized. Mr. Yankee inquired what was being done.

Mr. Varckette stated that he was aware of the situation. The City / Police Department is actively following up, it is an open case. Officers have been assigned and it is being investigated. Mr. Varckette stated that the Chief will reach out and let Mr. Yankee know where we are with the case.

Councilman James Baehr received a letter from a previous resident. Mr. Lee White formerly of 250 Greenridge Drive, Geneva, a twenty-four-year resident. Mr. Baehr read the letter which stated: During the time he lived in Geneva it was great place to raise a family. Homeowners took pride in their homes, their lawns, etc... The letter sate that the city began losing its value of family and sense of community, which was first noticed when the city did not pave Greenridge but instead did patchwork. New residents began buying homes on the street. The City did not enforce basic property upkeep. When a street or community continues to decline it will lose its economic value. Mr. White has heard that the city is considering allowing the grass to grow to nine inches and wrote the letter to appeal to the city to not allow the grass to grow over six inches in length.

Donte Leonardi
58 Johnathan Court

Mr. Leonardi moved into the city in 2015. Fantastic community. Mr. Leonardi knows the Whites. A new owner moved onto Greenridge. Mr. Leonardi described the condition of the property. The yard full of junk, stacks of kid's toys, a boat sits in the yard, with no cover, filling with water. There are four cars and a truck. The neighbors are afraid to say anything as he is a police officer. The grass is high, a John Deere sits in the front yard. Four houses in the neighborhood have sold in the last six months. Mr. Leonardi state that he cannot get to Johnathan Court without going down Greenridge.

Mr. Leonardi also noted that he has considered coming to council in the past regarding snow on Johnathan Court being dumped in his front yard and causing him to repair his front yard every year. Mr. Leonardi is now 72 and that is becoming more difficult.

Ms. Schenk agreed that no one wants to see junk in a neighbor's yard. It brings property values down. Mr. Rosebrugh noted that he could not see anyone moving as a result of high grass but trash definitely. The city's focus should be on problem properties.

Mr. Pasqualone is aware of this property. The property has been sited. Mr. Pasqualone has assisted with a number of other properties that are just as bad.

Mr. Griffiths stated that Mr. Rosebrugh's point is important, what is the city's priority, is the city focusing on some of the wrong things. A property like the one identified has been a problem for some time. Resources should be focused on the worst offenders. Mr. Griffiths stated that it is different than the grass issue. If the grass is six or nine inches that is a moot point. A property that is unsightly or crazy overgrown, that is totally different.

Mr. Varquette agreed that priorities are essential. The city's priority is to hold property owners to the minimum standard of the code. This property issue is a priority. The process can take time. Being overly aggressive creates problems also. Enforcement is about property value. Identifying the most unsightly as the highest priority.

City Manager Report:

August 6, storm event

The city managed the storm well in light of the significant winds. Communities nearby were harder hit and had to deal with flooding, down trees, electricity outages. As a result, a lot of the departments were involved predominately fire, police and streets.

West Main Street

Road closures are common and regular due to voids being found under the road. Traffic cannot be allowed on the road when a void is found for safety reasons.

Minutes of the fourth progress meeting were distributed to council. The next progress meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2024.

OPWC FY 24 (Round 38) Austin Road Pavement Improvement Project

The road pavement is completed. There was a wavy section that needed to be ground and repaved which is now completed.

Street Department Updates

The Street Department has been busy. A memorandum was distributed and provided an update for Council.

CDBG Senior Center ADA Improvement Project

Bids received for the project ranged from \$122,000 to \$200,000. The contract award is on tonight's agenda.

Grant Writer as an Independent Contractor

The city has reviewed proposals for a grant writer as an independent contractor. After review Mr. Varckette is seeking Council's approval to enter into a contract with CT Consultants, Inc. The agreement will be for twelve months for a monthly retainer of \$2,200 a month. It was noted by Mr. Pasqualone that due to the amount of the contract the approval of Council will require legislation. Mr. Varckette will present the legislation at the next council meeting.

OEPA Asset Management Grant

The city was awarded a grant of \$15,500 from the Division of Drinking and Ground Waters for the ongoing updating of our Asset Management Plan-Gap Analysis. The grant application was submitted by the Brandon Averill. The total cost of the project is \$25,500.00.

Gardiner Project –Street Light Replacement Phase Update

The first phase of the project is complete. The city is moving forward with planning phases two and three. Each phase is approximately 64 lights. Gardner is spot checking.

Appalachian Community Grant Program (ACGP) Status Update

The city continues to wait for implementation instructions. The city learned last week that they just procured new planners that will work with each of the communities. The city hopes to hear from Eastgate in the next two weeks. The project must be completed by October 2026.

Downtown Geneva in the Movies?

The city was approached by a production company looking to film a scene in downtown Geneva, a flashback scene. The city should learn more in September. The film crew consists of approximately 25 people and the filming is expected to last three to four hours.

Mr. Griffiths noted that line painting was in the budget, but a list has not yet been provided.

Items for Consideration of Council

Ordinance 3354 – Third Reading. An Ordinance Authorizing the Transfer of the Residual Balance of Several Funds.

Roll call on passage, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Baehr, Baker, Griffiths, Travis, Schenk). Ordinance 3354 duly passed.

Ordinance No. 3356. An Ordinance to Amend the 2024 Budget Through Appropriations and Fund Transfers, Attached Hereto and Marked Exhibit “A,” and declaring an emergency.

Motion by James Baehr, seconded by Jeffrey Griffiths that the rule of law requiring certain ordinances be read at three separate meetings be waived and suspended and Ordinance No. 3356 be placed on final roll for passage. Roll call, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Baehr, Barbo, Travis, Schenk). Motion by Dana Schenk to declare and pass Ordinance No. 3356 as an emergency measure, seconded by Robert Rosebrugh. Roll call, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Baehr, Baker, Travis, Schenk). Roll call on passage, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Baehr, Baker, Griffiths, Travis, Schenk) Ordinance No. 3356 duly passed.

Ordinance No. 3357. An Ordinance to Repeal Ordinance No. 3329 Amending Chapter 661.01(k) of the Geneva Codified Ordinances, and declaring an emergency.

Motion by William Baker, seconded by Jeffrey Griffiths that the rule of law requiring certain ordinances be read at three separate meetings be waived and suspended and Ordinance No. 3357 be placed on final roll for passage. Roll call, 6 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Barbo, Travis, Schenk), 1 nay (Baehr). Motion by Jeffrey Griffiths to declare and pass Ordinance No. 3357 as an emergency measure, seconded by William Baker. Roll call, 6 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Baker, Travis, Schenk), 1 nay (Baehr). Roll call on passage, 6 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Baker, Griffiths, Travis, Schenk), 1 nay (Baehr) Ordinance No. 3357 duly passed.

Ordinance No. 3358. An Ordinance to Repeal Ordinance No. 3334 Regulating Noxious Weeds, and Tree Planting, and declaring an emergency.

Motion by Jeffrey Griffiths, seconded by Dana Schenk that the rule of law requiring certain ordinances be read at three separate meetings be waived and suspended and Ordinance No. 3358 be placed on final roll for passage. Roll call, 6 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Barbo, Travis, Schenk); 1 nay (Baehr). Motion by William Baker to declare and pass Ordinance No. 3358 as an emergency measure, seconded by Jeffrey Griffiths. Roll call, 6 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Baker, Travis, Schenk); 1 nay (Baehr). Roll call on passage, 6 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Baker, Griffiths, Travis, Schenk); 1 nay (Baehr) Ordinance No. 3358 duly passed.

Resolution No. 3606. A Resolution Authorizing the Execution of “Then and Now” Certificates by the Director of Finance for Purchases, and declaring an emergency.

Motion by James Baehr, seconded by John Travis that the rule of law requiring certain resolutions be read at three separate meetings be waived and suspended and Resolution No. 3606 be placed on final roll for passage. Roll call, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Baehr, Barbo, Travis, Schenk). Motion by James Baehr to declare and pass Resolution No. 3606 as an emergency measure, seconded by Dana Schenk.

Roll call, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Baehr, Baker, Travis, Schenk). Roll call on passage, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Baehr, Baker, Griffiths, Travis, Schenk) Resolution No. 3606 duly passed.

Resolution No. 3607. A Resolution Authorizing the Acceptance of the Bid of CMG Contracting of Ashtabula for the Senior Center ADA Improvements, and declaring an emergency.

Motion by Dana Schenk, seconded by James Baehr that the rule of law requiring certain resolutions be read at three separate meetings be waived and suspended and Resolution No. 3607 be placed on final roll for passage. Roll call, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Baehr, Barbo, Travis, Schenk). Motion by James Baehr to declare and pass Resolution No. 3607 as an emergency measure, seconded by Dana Schenk. Roll call, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Baehr, Baker, Travis, Schenk). Roll call on passage, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Baehr, Baker, Griffiths, Travis, Schenk) Resolution No. 3607 duly passed.

Unfinished Business:

Jeff Griffiths provided DORA Logos designed by the Convention and Visitors Bureau and requested opinions with regard to the different designs. Mr. Griffiths has also gotten opinions from the business owners.

The Arborist met with Geneva, Geneva-on-the-Lake and the Township to discuss distribution of time and money for tree removal and planting. The Arborist also met with the Shade Tree Commission.

The court consolidation was briefly discussed. The lease is up on the building in 2026. The city would like the Court to stay in Geneva.

Mr. Griffiths stated that the Latino Fest did occur. This was the first year of the festival with actual size and scale. Officers Cahill and Gonzales did a great job. The site was great for the car show. The noise did travel beyond the festival. The festival had great attendance. The festival is the third Saturday in July.

New Business:

Mr. Rosebrugh reported that the Finance Committee (Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Travis) met on the fifth. Traci Welch and Joe Varkette explained the consolidation of the income tax and general fund and the purpose for doing so. The Finance Committee recommends the consolidation of the two funds, and that Ordinance No. 3359 An Ordinance Authorizing the Deposit of the City Income Tax Monies Directly into the General Fund be added to the agenda and read as a first reading.

Ordinance No. 3359 – First Reading. An Ordinance Authorizing the Deposit of the City Income Tax Monies Directly into the General Fund and Inactivate the Separate Income Tax Fund.

Payment of Bills – None.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Travis stated the Planning Commission trying to set up having Kris Hopkins come in make a presentation on the Zoning Update.

Citizen – None.

William Baker made a motion at 7:27 p.m. to adjourn to executive session to discuss pending litigation and personnel matters compensation of a public employee. James Baehr seconded the motion. Roll call, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Baehr, Baker, Schenk, Travis). The motion duly passed.

William Baker made a motion to reconvene at 8:17 p.m. Robert Rosebrugh seconded the motion. Roll call, 7 yeas (Barbo, Rosebrugh, Griffiths, Baehr, Baker, Schenk, Travis). The motion duly passed.

William Baker made a motion to adjourn.

James Baehr seconded the motion.

Council meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Recorded by: Phyllis Dunlap
Clerk of Council

President of Council

Clerk of Council