

**WARREN CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
JUNE 17, 2024 – 7:00 PM**

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*Corrected 8/19/2024*

**OPENING OF MEETING**

Mayor David Wortman presided over the June 17, 2024, regular meeting of Warren City Council in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building and opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Members present and responding to roll call were: Mayor David Wortman, John Barbera, Maurice Cashman, Danielle Flasher, Philip Gilbert, Wendy McCain, Jared Villella, and Junior Council Member Samuel Harvey. Members of City Staff present were Michael Holtz, City Manager; Jessica Byler, Finance Officer; David Krogler, Fire Chief; Teena Leary, Assistant City Clerk; Randall Rossey, Codes and Planning Director; Joseph Sproveri, Chief of Police; and Andrea Stapleford, City Solicitor.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT**

Mayor Wortman announced that Council met in executive session immediately prior to this meeting. The purpose of the session was for discussion of a pension matter under the Firefighters' collective bargaining agreement and potential litigation pertaining to unpaid ambulance service invoices.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Mayor Wortman welcomed all visitors. Present were:

Laurie Alberth	Robert Carlson	Kelley Coey (via Zoom)
Brian Hagberg	Ron McCall (via Zoom)	Heather Cathcart Norris
Michelle Peterson	Ron Peterson	Kevin Sheldon

Robert Carlson, Vice-Chair of the Warren County Historical Society, read an email from David Winans concerning the Eagles Crest Project.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mr. Cashman made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried unanimously.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to not amend the agenda. The motion was seconded by Miss Flasher and carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon motion by Mr. Cashman and second by Miss Flasher, the minutes of the May 20, 2024, public hearing and regular meeting were unanimously approved. Mrs. Stapleford noted that Mrs. McCain's statement regarding the reason for her abstention on the vote regarding outdoor alcohol service for twig & vine is to be attached to the minutes.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence to come before Council.

**RECOGNITION: SAMUEL HARVEY, JUNIOR COUNCIL MEMBER**

Mayor Wortman recognized Samuel Harvey for his service as Junior Council Member during the 2023 – 2024 school year and presented him with an inscribed wooden pen and case. Mayor Wortman also congratulated Mr. Harvey on his appointment to the United States Military Academy.

West Point. Mr. Harvey thanked Council for the opportunity to serve and stated that it had been an interesting experience.

#### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION: PENSION INVESTMENT POLICY**

Mrs. Byler noted that at the March 2024 Council meeting, Council was notified that Vanguard, who had been the investment manager for all three pension plans, was no longer servicing public pension plans. Upon recommendation of the pension committees, Council approved Marquette as the new Investment Manager and Custodian for all City of Warren pension plans.

The Pension Committees met with Marquette for the first time on May 29, 2024, for an educational meeting as well as to discuss the Investment Policy Statement (IPS). Marquette recommended to the Committees that the IPS be updated to reflect a more detailed description of Marquette's investment strategy in addition to modifications of the asset allocation to diversify the portfolio.

The committees unanimously agreed on the updated IPS and asset allocation and recommended that Council approve the new IPS and asset allocation.

Mr. Cashman stated that he believes further review is required prior to adopting the IPS and made the motion to table action pending further review of the Investment Policy Statement and approval of the Pension Committees. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gilbert and carried unanimously.

#### **BID AWARD: BETTS PARK RESTROOM RENOVATION**

Mr. Holtz stated that on June 5, 2024, bids were opened for the 2024 Betts Park Restroom Renovation Project. The scope of the Project consists of renovating the easternmost restroom at Betts Park to meet current ADA accessibility standards as well as installing a new asphalt shingle roof, interior and exterior painting, sidewalk, park bench, and landscape restoration.

The City received three (3) responsive bids with XL Excavating of Cambridge Springs providing the lowest responsive bid in the amount of \$119,912.00. Funding for this project includes \$59,956 committed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, \$50,000 committed by a private foundation, and \$9,956 in matching funds to be paid from the General Fund.

City staff did not note any irregularities during review of the bid and recommended awarding a construction contract to XL Excavating. The Project is expected to be completed by October 31, 2024.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to award the contract for the 2024 Betts Park Restroom Renovation Project to XL Excavating in the amount of \$119,912.00. The motion was seconded by Miss Flasher and carried unanimously.

#### **DISCUSSION: CITIZEN SUGGESTION REGARDING EAGLES CREST PROJECT**

Mr. Holtz noted that David Winans addressed Council during the Visitor portion of the May 20, 2024 Council meeting and suggested that City Council consider contracting with a third-party consultant to conduct a review of the Eagles Crest Project and its viability.

***Ron Peterson spoke in opposition to the project and alleged that paperwork and the Memorandum of Agreement between SHPO and Hudson were not properly handled. He further stated that Hudson's market study was not a proper study and should have been conducted by a firm not hired by Hudson. He later questioned the timing of the Section 106 process (Ms. Coey responded that the process could not begin until funding was awarded). Mr. Peterson went on to cite a cooperation agreement dated January 11, 2020, which he believes indemnifies the City from any legal action that might result if the City were to make any effort to stop the Hudson Project; Mrs. Stapleford stated that she did not concur with his statement.***

***Kevin Sheldon questioned what has changed since the inception of the project and alluded that someone involved has a vested financial interest. He further stated that comparing the Eagles Crest Project, Hudson's Clarion Project, and the Cambridge Warren building (referencing discussion among Council members) was not comparing apples to oranges. (Corrected 8/19/2024)***

Mrs. McCain made the motion to hire an external consultant to determine how the project will impact the City and its viability. The motion was seconded by Mr. Barbera.

Miss Flasher asked for the record if a change in the project's location would be viable. Ms. Coey responded that the funding award is site-specific and any change in location would require the funding application process to start from the beginning.

Following public input and considerable discussion by Council members, the vote was called and Mrs. McCain's motion failed with five nay votes cast by Miss Flasher, Mr. Cashman, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Villella, and Mayor Wortman.

#### **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**Marketing Committee:** Mr. Villella reported that, due to unknown circumstances, the City has lost access to one of its Facebook pages but was able to re-establish a new page. The number of followers of the new page is growing steadily. He indicated that the Committee will meet during the next month to review data pertaining to the online Council meeting videos. In response to Miss Flasher's question, he stated that an Instagram account has been considered; further discussions are expected once Warren Worx is active.

**Council of Governments (COG):** Miss Flasher reported that it was a standard meeting. There was discussion regarding a move to meeting once every two months and establishing a Junior COG Member Program.

**Riverfront Development:** Mr. Holtz reported that Greenman-Pedersen is designing the dock and an Appalachian Regional Commission grant application is in progress. It is hoped that the project will be put to bid in the spring of 2025. He also noted that the Trestle-to-Trestle group is reviewing what might be placed in the greenspace.

**Warren Worx:** Mayor Wortman reported that the first public meeting was well-attended by a diverse group of participants and covered a broad base of topics. Regular public meetings will be held at 5:30 PM on the second Wednesday of each month at locations to be determined. It is anticipated that a marketing director and a marketing firm will be selected by mid-July.

**Comprehensive Plan Task Force:** Mr. Rossey reported on the activities of the sub-committees:

- **Directional Signs Committee:** Reviewed the recommendation of a sign manufacturer. Member Doug Hearn is researching additional companies and will report his findings. It is anticipated that a sign project would be completed in phases.
- **Mulberry Park Committee:** The Committee will review the park survey responses and make a recommendation.
- **Downtown Committee:** An email chain was established and is working well. A yet-to-be-determined downtown event is being discussed.

#### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS – MAY, 2024**

The following reports were provided for Council's review:

Police Department  
Fire Department  
Department of Public Works  
Codes, Planning, and Zoning Department

**APPROVED MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

Council acknowledged receipt of the following approved minutes:

Blighted Property Review Committee	– April 18, 2024	Regular Meeting
Parks, Recreation & Landscape Commission	– April 23, 2024	Regular Meeting
Redevelopment Authority	– April 24, 2024	Regular Meeting

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Miss Flasher and second by Mr. Villella, Mayor Wortman declared the meeting adjourned.