

**WARREN CITY COUNCIL  
PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 16, 2024 – 7:00 PM**

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**PUBLIC HEARING – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT**

Vice-President Flasher opened the public hearing. Mrs. Byler stated that City staff are in the process of preparing the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for FFY 2024 Entitlement Funds in the amount of \$308,252.00. As part of the program guidelines, this was the second of two public hearings being held prior to requesting City Council's approval of the grant application submission. The first public hearing was held on August 8, 2024, at 4:30 PM in the Municipal Building Conference Room.

The proposed use of the funding for FFY 2024 is improvements to Hammond Street under the Street/Road Improvements Activity. Hammond Street was identified as a severely deteriorated concrete street and this funding will allow for improvements to the pavement, subbase, curbing, sidewalk, drainage, and sewer.

Citizens were invited to provide comments regarding the proposed CDBG Program Activities and the CDBG Program in general. Mrs. Byler stated that in addition to the public hearing, comments may be submitted to City offices no later than October 4, 2024. All comments and concerns will be reviewed prior to presenting the application to Council at its regular meeting on October 21, 2024.

There being no citizens present who wished to provide comment, Miss Flasher closed the public hearing.

**OPENING OF REGULAR MEETING**

Vice-President Flasher presided over the September 16, 2024, regular meeting of Warren City Council in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building and opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT**

Vice-President Flasher announced that Council met in executive session immediately prior to this meeting for discussion regarding provisions of the Firefighters Collective Bargaining Agreement, potential acquisition of real property, and potential litigation regarding a sewer line and Emergency Medical Services.

**JUNIOR COUNCIL MEMBERS: INTRODUCTION AND PLEDGE**

Vice-President Flasher introduced Lexi Paris and Bianca Villella and administered the Junior Council Pledge. Miss Paris and Miss Villella will serve during the 2024-2025 academic year.

**ROLL CALL**

Members present and responding to roll call were: John Barbera (via Zoom), Maurice Cashman, Danielle Flasher, Philip Gilbert, Wendy McCain, Jared Villella, and Junior Council Members Lexi Paris and Bianca Villella. Mayor Wortman joined the meeting in progress via conference phone. 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.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Vice-President Flasher welcomed all visitors. Present were:

Leslie Bailey	Josh Cotton	Brian Hagberg
Kristen Koppenahfer	Warren Koppenahfer	Ron Peterson
Attorney Mike Roberts (via Zoom)	Colleen Sloan	Heidi Villella

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **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 among the six members present.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to not amend the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried unanimously among the six members present.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon motion by Mr. Villella and second by Mr. Cashman, the minutes of the August 19, 2024, regular meeting were unanimously approved by the six members present.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence to come before Council.

## **RECOGNITION AND GUEST PRESENTER: KOPE SERVICES, LLC**

Vice-President Flasher presented Warren Koppenahfer, CEO/Owner of Kope Services, LLC, with a certificate of appreciation. Mr. Koppenahfer and his crew performed a gratis cleaning of the monuments, amphitheatre, and walkways of Soldiers and Sailors Park. Mr. Koppenahfer then addressed Council and provided a brief history of the company and outlined the services that it provides.

## **BREEZELINE FRANCHISE RENEWAL PUBLIC COMMENT RESPONSES**

Attorney Mike Roberts, of the Cohen Law Group, participated via Zoom and presented an overview of the public comments received during the July 15 public hearing pertaining to the Breezeline Cable Franchise Renewal Agreement and his responses to those comments. He stressed that the franchise pertains only to the cable television portion of Breezeline's services and is not applicable to internet services. Attorney Roberts indicated that the renewal franchise agreement is expected to include stronger stipulations regarding downtime and will also require that there be a location within the City to meet customers' technical needs and to receive in-person payments.

## **HUDSON COMPANIES/EAGLES CREST UPDATE**

Solicitor Stapleford stated that, as Council is aware, the Hudson Companies has withdrawn from its planned Eagles Crest Project. She further stated that she is in receipt of correspondence from Attorney Ron McCall, Hudson Companies' legal counsel, which includes a draft agreement regarding the termination of agreements pertaining to the project. The draft agreement and City and Redevelopment Authority records will be carefully reviewed to ensure that all matters related to the project are properly addressed.

## **APPOINTMENTS: PLANNING COMMISSION**

Mr. Rossey stated that there were two vacant seats on the Planning Commission. He noted that three applications were received and presented to Council for its consideration. Following discussion, the following motions were made:

1. Mr. Gilbert made the motion to appoint Ron Peterson to the term expiring on December 31, 2024, and Ryan Irwin to the term expiring on December 31, 2027. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cashman. Following the vote on Mrs. McCain's motion (below), Mr. Gilbert's motion carried unanimously among the six Council members present.

2. Mrs. McCain made the motion to appoint Leslie Bailey to the term expiring on December 31, 2024, and Ron Peterson to the term expiring on December 31, 2027. The motion was seconded by Miss Flasher and resulted in a tie vote with three votes in the affirmative and three nay votes cast by Mr. Cashman, Mr. Gilbert, and Mr. Villella.

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 1979: FIREFIGHTERS PENSION PLAN AMENDMENT AND RESTATEMENT**

Mrs. Byler stated that the City of Warren Firefighters Pension plan was last amended and restated in 2009. Since that time, several ordinances were passed to address changes made to the plan. In order to consolidate the various amendments into a single comprehensive document, the plan must be restated. The restated plan was prepared by Randall Rhoades Law firm and reviewed by Mockenhaupt (the City's actuary) and was approved by the Union's legal counsel.

Mr. Villella made the motion to approve the ordinance providing for the Firefighters Pension Plan Amendment and Restatement. The motion was seconded by Mrs. McCain and carried unanimously among the six Council members present.

#### **AGREEMENT: FIREFIGHTERS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

Mrs. Byler stated that the City engaged in discussions with the International Association of Firefighters, Local Union 1835, regarding a three-year contract period commencing on January 1, 2025. The City's Bargaining Committee consisted of Mayor Wortman, Mike Holtz, and Mrs. Byler. An agreement was negotiated and is outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the I.A.F.F., Local Union 1835 regarding a three-year contract. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried unanimously among the six Council members present.

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 1980: PENALTIES FOR TOBACCO USE IN PARKS**

Mayor Wortman joined the meeting via Zoom during this discussion.

Chief Sproveri stated that Subsection 340-8 I.(13) of the Code of the City of Warren prohibits the use of tobacco products within Park, Recreation, and Conservation areas; however, it does not provide for penalties for violations. It was recommended that the Code be amended to provide that violations of §340-8 I.(13) are subject to the penalties provided for in the City Code under §340-10 Violations and Penalties.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to approve the ordinance providing for penalties for violations of §340-8 I.(13) of the Code of the City of Warren. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried unanimously (7 members present).

#### **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**Marketing Committee.** Mr. Villella reported that updated information for the Business Resources page of the City's website were reviewed. The committee reviewed viewer data and it was determined that the videos of City Council meetings will continue to remain online for a period of twelve months and will then be deleted; this topic is subject to ongoing review. He further reported that, in light of the work being accomplished by the Comprehensive Plan Task Force, future meetings of the Marketing Committee will be held on an as-needed basis; a meeting will be held in December to discuss plans for 2025. He indicated that the Committee would like to be involved in Task Force discussions regarding way-finding signs and murals on buildings.

**Council of Governments.** Miss Flasher stated that Clarendon was the host community and the featured speaker was a Red Cross representative. The speaker addressed the challenges faced

due to a decrease in the number of volunteers. Also noted was Damage Assessment Training conducted in Youngsville which four personnel from the City attended.

**Riverfront Development.** Mr. Holtz reported that Local Share Account grant applications pertaining to the project are being prepared and will be presented to Council in November. Greenman-Pedersen, Inc., City Engineer, is in the process of designing the project and it is anticipated that the project will be put to bid in the spring of 2025. Mr. Holtz indicated that the acquisition of the Breezepoint (Robert Yoder) properties is expected to be completed in approximately sixty days.

**Comprehensive Plan Task Force.**

Mr. Rossey reported that members of the Task Force Committee and City staff met with Advanced Sign and toured proposed wayfinding signage sites. The company will develop a proposal for the committee's review and comparison with the proposal received from another company. The Downtown Group within the Task Force is preparing for a Fall Foliage Festival to be held October 11 and 12. The event will include business open houses, line dancing, a Harvest Hoedown, and a Trail of Treats at Crescent Park.

**Warren Worx.**

Miss Flasher, Mrs. McCain, Mr. Villella, and Mr. Holtz attended the recent Warren Worx Stakeholders meeting. It was reported that sub-committees are being formed, Warren Worx Executive Committee meetings are open to the public, and Truth Collective is moving closer to a final branding product.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS – AUGUST, 2024**

The following reports were provided for Council's review:

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

Chief Krogler advised Council that the Fire Department sent four personnel, the rescue boat, and equipment to aid in the aftermath of Hurricane Debby; this was the first deployment as part of a task force. Personnel from the Glade Fire Department also responded.

**APPROVED MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

Council acknowledged receipt of the following approved minutes:

Blighted Property Review Committee	– July 18, 2024	Regular Meeting
Parks, Recreation & Landscape Commission	– July 23, 2024	Regular Meeting
Planning Commission	– July 17, 2024	Regular Meeting
Redevelopment Authority	– July 24, 2024	Regular Meeting

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Mr. Cashman and second by Mr. Villella, Vice-President Flasher adjourned the meeting.