



City of Kent
Wednesday, November 6, 2024
City Council Committee Meetings
320 S. Depeyster Street, Kent, OH 44240

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:00pm, Mayor Jerry T. Fiala called the City Council Committee Meetings to order.

Present: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Ms. Melissa Celko; Mr. Jeff Clapper; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Chris Hook; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner

Also Present: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor, and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Mr. Jamie Samels, Fire Chief; Ms. Dominique Bollenbacher, Community Engagement Coordinator; Ms. Angela Manley, Director of Parks and Recreation, Mr. Nick Cecil, Director of IT, Ms. Kathy Coleman, Interim Clerk of Council

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - Chair Fiala/Vice-Chair Amrhein
No Business.

HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE - Chair Amrhein/Vice-Chair Sidoti

Warming Center Discussion with Ann Marie Noble, Executive Director of Shepherd's House

Ms Susel started the presentation by explaining that, although there has long been the consideration to provide warming/cooling shelters in Kent, there were barriers such as building and health code requirements and safety measures that proved to be prohibitive. Since Shepherd House was already established, Ms. Susel reached out to Ms. Noble to begin discussions of partnering with Kent to assist Kent residents needing

shelter. Ms. Noble provided an overview of their services, which include not only the temporary warming/cooling areas, but longer-term residential occupation with wraparound services. She highlighted the priority of safety at Shepherd House and reported that all residents are required to have a background check with 5 years clear of any assault or domestic violence charges. The warming/cooling center is separate from the residential center and features a social area, access to laundry facilities, and 3 meals provided per day.

Transportation to the center was discussed; PARTA will provide free rides to Shepherd House during their regularly scheduled runs, but the rider must be sure to tell the driver that's where they want to go. Emergency personnel have also provided transportation as needed, but there remains a gap for individuals who simply lack transportation during off-hours. The idea of utilizing ride-share companies was discussed; it is a process that Shepherd House currently uses. Their system requires the individual to call Shepherd House first, then Shepherd House will call the ride-share company to make the pick-up arrangements and provide payment.

Financial considerations were discussed. Ms. Susel stressed that this type of service should be funded by the City, rather than via a competitive grant to ensure stability. She also acknowledged that the use of this service would depend on the weather, which is unpredictable, but she suggested an initial cost of \$8,000. Ms. Susel and Ms. Noble will continue to work out details of the program if the funding is approved.

Questions from Council included:

- A question about whether the center has any regular guests from Kent and Ms. Noble replied that there are several "regulars" from Kent
- Clarification that warming center residents are not required to leave during the day, as the residential guests do
- A question about how to spread the word to those who might use the service, and Ms. Noble replied that most people do have phones and access to social media, as well as word of mouth via an informal network. Ms. Susel suggested that information could be sent out in the monthly utility bills.
- Clarification of whether the \$8,000 would just be for the warming center or cooling as well. Ms. Susel responded that, at this point, the \$8,000 should be considered a placeholder for now, but the budget would be monitored closely and adjusted as necessary.
- A question about how the communication process would work for someone who wanted to request the service. Ms. Susel reiterated the ride-share and Parta options, and stated that they would continue to come up with as many scenarios and solutions as possible. She also stated that no HUD-funding would be used so there were no income requirements.

MOTION TO ALLOCATE \$8,000 TO PARTNER WITH SHEPHERD HOUSE TO PROVIDE WARMING/COOLING SERVICES FOR KENT RESIDENTS WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was MADE BY Mr. Turner, SECONDED by Mr. Hook, and CARRIED by unanimous voice vote.

City of Kent Police / Kent State University Police Mutual Aid Contract - Nick Shearer, Police Chief

Chief Shearer provided the background for the Mutual Aid Agreement with KSU that has been in place for a number of years and is up for renewal. The agreement provides the Kent Police Department with mutual aid assistance from the Kent State University Police Department when requested. In addition, the agreement defines the Kent/KSU Joint Patrol

District which will be decreased in size, and make some minor changes to the administrative functions of KSU officers when acting within the Joint Patrol District.

MOTION TO EXTEND THE MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE KENT POLICE DEPARTMENT AND KENT STATE UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was MADE BY Ms. Shaffer Bish, SECONDED by Mr. Turner, and CARRIED by unanimous voice vote.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - Chair Rosenberg/Vice-Chair Clapper

West River Parking Lot Agreement Update Bridget Susel, Community Development Director

Ms. Susel discussed the update to the parking lot agreement with West River Medical. The building is owned by Dr. Hussing and is used by him and other medical providers, but the parking lot is owned by the City. The original lease agreement put into place 20 years ago authorized the City to pay a maximum of \$2,500 toward lot maintenance and landscaping. The maintenance and landscaping now typically costs around \$10,000, so this update would increase the City's cost to \$5,000.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE UPDATE TO PARKING LOT AGREEMENT WITH WEST RIVER MEDICAL WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was MADE BY Mr. Amrhein, SECONDED by Ms Celko, and CARRIED by unanimous voice vote.

STREETS, SIDEWALKS & UTILITIES COMMITTEE - Chair Sidoti/Vice-Chair Clapper

2024 Capital Projects Update Jim Bowling, City Engineer

Mr. Ruller began the presentation by briefly describing the purpose and structure of a multi-year Capital plan, explaining the long-term nature of the planning and project timeframe, and the importance of acknowledging the progress made along the way to long-term goals.

Mr. Bowling presented a slide show which highlighted the long term vision of the city - To Be the City of Choice in Northeast Ohio for Residents, Businesses, and Students - tied in with strategic values such as quality of life and a safe community. He then went into more detail about areas such as city utilities and city right-of-way projects, those that are visible to everyone.

SEWER SYSTEM UPDATES:

WATER RECLAMATION FACILITY NEEDS	BUDGETARY COSTS	OUTSIDE FUNDING	STATUS
SW Pump Station Replacement	\$2.6 million	DEFA Loan	COMPLETED
Final Clarifiers	\$3.6 million	State & Local ARPA OPWC	COMPLETED
Heat Digesters	\$7.8 million	OPWC, Local ARPA	Construction

Yacavona PS Decommissioning	\$1.3 million	None	COMPLETED
Motor Control Center Replacement	\$1.0 million	TBD	
Primary Clarifier	\$0.8 million	OPWC	Construction
Aeration Basins	\$0.5 million	TBD	
Headworks Renovation	\$7.5 million	TBD	
Sewer Collection System Major Needs			
Cuyahoga River Sewer Relocation	+/- \$18 million	TBD	

RIGHT OF WAY PROJECTS:

The focus of the City Right-of-Way projects are to maintain and improve on what we have. Key elements are traffic management, pedestrian orientation, protecting neighborhoods, preserving Kent's small-town atmosphere, and maintaining safety. Projects include:

- Sunrise Boulevard bridge rehabilitation
- Annual street and sidewalk repairs
- Walnut Street reconstruction
- Portage/Freedom Trail connection
- East Main Street Improvement Project

KEY ENDEAVORS FOR 2025:

- East Main Street – Start Construction
- Freedom/Middlebury Trail Connection
- Annual Street & Sidewalk Program
- Well Testing (2 Sites)
- WRF - Heat Digesters
- WRF – Primary Clarifier Rehab #1
- 500k/400k Water Tank Rehabilitation
- SR 59 Alt. Transportation (Design)
- N Mantua St. Improvements (Design)
- Stow/Summit St Bridge and Ped/Bike Imp. (Design)

Mr. Bowling concluded by discussing public communications regarding the projects, supporting an "everything approach" including putting information on the City website, social media sites, Tree City Bulletin, changeable message boards, email updates, and any other suitable method.

ODOT Director's Deed Property Transfer Jim Bowling, City Engineer

Mr. Bowling explained that there is a parcel on Barnett Rd that was created in 1970 when SR 261 was built, which is owned by ODOT. However, ODOT does not maintain it, the City does. He said that this property transfer will help rectify the situation and is asking for

Council's approval to accept the property transfer.

MOTION to ACCEPT PROPERTY TRANSFER WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was MADE by Ms. Rosenberg, SECONDED by Mr. Amrhein, and CARRIED by unanimous voice vote.

FINANCE COMMITTEE - Chair DeLeone/Vice-Chair Celko

Health Department Accreditation Funding Joan Seidel, Kent City Health Commissioner

Ms. Seidel explained that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides funding to local health departments to assist with the cost of maintaining accreditation. The CDC will be providing \$50,000 in December or first quarter of 2025 and Ms. Seidel requested Council's support in receiving the funding and using it for accreditation purposes.

A councilperson asked if \$50,000 was sufficient to cover the costs and Ms. Seidel replied that it would cover approximately two years' worth of annual fees, along with some required activities, such as the development of a community health assessment and subsequent community health improvement plan.

MOTION TO ACCEPT \$50,000 FROM THE CDC TO MAINTAIN ACCREDITATION FOR THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was MADE by Mr. Turner, SECONDED by Mr. Amrhein, and CARRIED by unanimous voice vote.

Resolution Requesting the Transfer of Taxes from Portage County, Rhonda Hall, Finance Director

Ms. Hall requested Council's approval to request from the county an advance on the City's property taxes, which is done periodically throughout each year.

MOTION TO REQUEST THE TRANSFER OF TAXES FROM PORTAGE COUNTY WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was MADE BY Ms. Rosenberg, SECONDED by Mr. Sidoti, and CARRIED by unanimous voice vote.

Proposed 2025-29 Capital Plan Update Rhonda Hall, Finance Director and Jim Bowling, City Engineer

Ms. Hall reviewed the budget for the capital plan update.

Capital plan – the capital plan is a five-year forecast of projects that are necessary to keep the City of Kent viable. We, the City Manager, department heads and staff, meet annually to determine what projects are necessary in the short-term, the next year (having the highest need priorities and available funding sources) and long-term priorities, meaning in year 2 through year 5. Components of the plan include:

Water Fund

- The beginning balance for the Water Fund for 2025 is projected slightly above \$3.3 million.
- At the end of each year, we will assess the highest priority projects
- If we don't have the funds available for the Wellfield Development, the project may get pushed back.

- Currently we are showing \$2.5 Million in 2026 for that project per Mr. Bowling's discussion, and if everything goes well in 2025, we will move to the development stage.

Sewer Fund

- Per Mr. Bowling's discussion, the Sewer Fund is decades-long investments to upgrade the plants.
- We will start 2025 with approximately \$4.8 million for the cash balance.
- We are starting this fund with more than we anticipated, due to receiving grants that were unexpected, moving more of the project expenses to the ARPA fund, and bids for projects coming in lower than expected.

Storm Water Fund

- Beginning balance for 2025 is expected to be close to \$1.9 million.
- This fund doesn't have projects that are at the same priority level as the water and sewer fund, thus the reason for the lower number of projects.
- No rate increase is being requested at this time.

Solid Waste Fund

- This sheet is new to the CAP Plan book.
- This fund has been subsidized by the Capital Fund by covering the cost of equipment such as leaf truck purchases.
- This fund wasn't utilized in the past due to the lawsuit. All Enterprise type funds (utility funds) are supposed to be self-sustaining, based on governmental accounting standards and from what the Blue-Ribbon panel had suggested.
- You will see that a discussion for a potential rate increase is imminent due to more usage of the fund, causing lower fund balances.

Operating Funds

- This last page is the combination of the General Fund, Income Tax Fund, Street, Construction Maintenance and Repair Fund, Income Tax Safety Fund, Fire & EMS Fund and the Capital Improvements Fund.
- We anticipate starting 2025 off with almost \$18.5 million.
- As part of the Capital Fund, we allocate 25% of the Engineering Department salaries to this fund.
- We have been very conservative in our spending so that we would have the funds available for the City's portion of the E. Main Street project, instead of having to issue debt or take out a loan.
- The City's portion of the E. Main Street project is expected to be \$2.3 million of the \$22.2 million project.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CAPITAL PLAN WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was MADE by Mr. Sidoti, SECONDED by Ms. Rosenberg, and CARRIED by unanimous voice vote.

2024 Budget Appropriations Amendment Rhonda Hall, Finance Director

Ms. Hall requested Council's approval for a 2024 budget appropriations amendment which reflected a net reduction in appropriations.

MOTION TO APPROVE BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS AMENDMENT WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was MADE BY Mr. Sidoti, SECONDED by Ms. Rosenberg, and CARRIED by unanimous voice vote.

LAND USE COMMITTEE- Chair Shaffer Bish /Vice- Chair Hook

No business.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Kathleen Coleman', written over a horizontal line.

Kathleen Coleman
Interim Clerk of Council

Any person who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or a modification of policies and procedures to participate in any City or City Council public meeting or event should contact the Clerk of Council at 330-678-8007. Any request for auxiliary aid or other accommodation should be made as soon as possible, but no later than forty-eight hours prior to the event.