Willard, Ohio

January 17, 2023

The Council of the City of Willard met in regular session on Tuesday, January 17, 2023, with the President of Council calling the meeting to order. The meeting was opened in prayer by Pastor Austin Peto.

**ROLL CALL:** The Clerk called the roll and reported the following councilpersons present: Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson and Sattig.

**MINUTES:** Minutes of the Regular Council and Council Work Session meeting held on January 3, 2023, and January 9, 2023, were presented for approval. In that copies were furnished to each Councilperson prior to the meeting, there was no request they be read. Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that they be approved as received. In a called vote therein Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

**CITIZENS DISCUSSIONS:**

* Bob Fusco- 563 Butte- brought his concern to Council about the City no longer doing building inspections. City Manager, Hamons, explained to Fusco the reasoning behind the decision of no longer having a residential building department.

**BID PROPOSALS:**

**SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS:**

* City Development Commission- Mary Ann Sellers agreed to another 4-year term. Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that Sellers continued term be accepted. In a called vote therein Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

**COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:** None.

**TABLED ITEMS:** None.

**REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:**

1. Charter/Legislative – McKenzie, Johnson
2. Finance –Olson, Sattig
3. Public Works – Babcock, Daniel
4. Safety – Babcock, Daniel, Olson
5. Utilities – McKenzie, Daniel, Olson

**REPORTS FROM OFFICERS:** Motion made by Olson, seconded by Babcock to approve Finance Directors Report from December 2022. Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson, and Sattig vote yea.

**REPORT FROM CITY MANAGER:** The City Manager’s report was reviewed as it was presented to Council.

The next food giveaway is Monday, January 23rd, from 3-5 pm.

The Food Bank has sold its building but is relocating to the back end of the Christian Alliance Church on Maple Street.

An Ordinance and Resolution on the Safety Service Levy is being brought before the Council tonight. The city administration, including the City Manager, Finance Director, Fire and Police Chief, asks Council to approve placing this Safety Service Levy on the May 2nd Special Election to sustain the safety

services provided for our community. We ask that Council approves placing a 1/2 % income tax for five years to secure these services in our community.

This levy is needed for our Fire Department because they rely heavily on part-time/volunteer personnel to assist full-time firefighters and paramedics. Due to employee shortages, fire and EMS personnel have dramatically decreased in the last couple of years. In 1998 we had 38 part-time workers that all lived in our coverage area. Today, only 15/32 of the part-time workers live in our coverage area. This is making it more difficult to have people able to respond quickly to calls. We are grateful for our part-time workers; however, these workers have other dedicated jobs in other cities and work part-time for our fire department on their days off. We need to get to the point where we are always able to adequately staff two ambulances. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. A previous city manager stated that “If you are going to have a heart attack, make sure you are the first one.” That is a serious statement, and we shouldn’t put ourselves in a position where our community members must chance the service and rely on circumstances. We should be adequately staffed. At the same time, we are facing manning issues, we are also experiencing an increase in call volume. Last year we had 1,970 calls which was 301 more than we had in 2021.

The levy for the Police Department is needed in the same way. There are many times there is minimal staff with only two officers on the road. We are lucky that we haven’t had a big incident where more officers are needed. We currently have thirteen full-time police officers. This includes the police and assistant chief and a school resource officer who is on the school campus nine months of the year. This also puts a strain on our officers and is a safety concern as well. We do currently have one part-time detective working but the more detectives we have the more aggressive we can be and get criminals behind bars.

If the levy was passed, what would we do with it? It would allow us to hire four additional full-time fire/EMS personnel, bringing the total full-time fire department personnel to twelve. The fire department works in three separate shifts covering 24 hours each. The levy would allow each shift to be staffed with four full-time workers, assuring enough staffing for two ambulances to respond at any time. It would also allow quicker responses to other emergencies, such as house fires or vehicle accidents, with the proper equipment out of the gate without waiting for other volunteer firefighters to respond from home if they are even available.

The police department would allow us to put three additional officers and backfill the two full-time vacant detective positions. More officers on the streets would allow us better protection throughout the city and enable us to adequately staff the departments.

The city administration does realize there may not be enough certified candidates but some of this grant would allow us the opportunity to hire homegrown candidates. The other problem we have is competition. We are competing with other communities that can better secure their safety service departments due to a higher income tax that allows for adequate staffing. We are currently at a disadvantage with our income tax at 1.25% we do have an eighth of a percent for the police that is voted on every five years. The surrounding community’s income tax in comparison is at a higher rate than ours. It is becoming more difficult for us to compete but moving the income tax to 1.75% would allow us to provide the adequate safety services our residents deserve.

If the council voted to put this levy on the ballot it would affect anyone who lives or works in Willard and has earned income. This levy does not tax benefits such as social security, retirement pensions, interest, unemployment, alimony, or child support. We do have credit for taxes paid to other communities, which means if our income tax rate is 1.75 % and the city you work in has an income tax rate of 2%, you will owe nothing to the City of Willard. If the city you work in has an income tax of 1.5%, you only pay the difference of .25% to Willard.

We are asking that this levy be in place for five years. This is important because this will allow the voters the opportunity to grade our performance to see if our services remain to their satisfaction.

The median household income for the City of Willard is $48,558. If the levy is passed it would cost the average household $15.17 more a month that they currently pay in income taxes. We ask that you allow us to this levy to be put on the ballot in May.

The bid opening for the Water Treatment Plant has been moved from January 18 to February 15 at 1pm. This was at the request of the Ohio EPA and Prime AE Group. The EPA has some changes be made to the water treatment plan project, the recommendations are minimal, but require additional time to bid. Some of the requirements include adding spill containment around standby generators, replacing double walled storage tanks with spill containment areas, additional details on certain air gaps, and more detail on storage of chemicals. We did have a pre-bid meeting last week that was well attended, the more bids hopefully allow for more favorable pricing.

A resolution is being created to re-advertise the bid for the US 224 Storm Sewer Replacement. This project was previously advertised but only had one bidder who was over the 10% contingency allotment. Therefore, the bid was automatically rejected. We hope that we can receive multiple bids closer to the engineers’ estimate of $128,500. The State of Ohio has agreed to pay $95,000 of the total cost of the project.

The Park Street Water line replacement begun January 13th. Driven Excavating has installed over 1000 feet of the total two thousand six hundred fifty feet main line that will be replaced. Their plan is to upgrade from a 4-inch line to a new 6-inch line. Once this is done and tested, they will start replacing residential service lines.

The maintenance department found and repaired a substantial water main break on a 10” water line in the 900 block of Main Street. The water never surfaced; it was going directly into the storm sewer that did not travel to the wastewater treatment facility. After the leak was fixed the water production has decreased.

The belt press rehab at the wastewater treatment plant is complete. Now that the belt press is back in operation, we will begin processing the sludge that was awaiting to be processed during the rehab.

Reminder that tomorrow we will be having a public meeting on the formation of the joint regional sewer district at 6 pm in the Willard Council Chambers.

Council is requested to accept the following donations:

$500 anonymous donation for the police department. Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that this donation be accepted by Council. In a called vote, Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson, and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

$103.97 from public donations collected for the Christmas Festival of Lights. Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that this donation be accepted by Council. In a called vote, Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson, and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

President asked for Questions-

Mayor Joe Daniel thanked Hamons for putting all the information together for the Safety Levy presented to the Council. He expressed his concern about the disturbances at Praxis Recovery Center that our Police Department has been responding to. Daniel stated that he is impressed with the Police Departments Monthly Reports and recognizes their outstanding work.

City Manager, Hamons, informed the council that he did meet with representatives at Praxis and they have changed some security measures to alleviate disturbance calls. Hamons stated that he was unsure what kind of security they have but knows that it isn’t a lockdown facility.

Babcock stated that he still believes ODOT should be responsible or at least help with the cost of repairing the 224 storm sewer replacement.

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2559-23**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER, CITY OF WILLARD, OHIO, TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS FOR THE US 224 STORM SEWER REPLACEMENT,** was presented by Council President for its first reading by title only. This was done by the Council Clerk.

Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that the rules be suspended, and the Resolution adopted on its first reading. In a called vote, Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson, and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that the Resolution be adopted. In a called vote, Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson, and Sattig voted yea. Motion adopted.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2560-23**

**A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE NECESSITY OF AN ELECTION ON THE QUESTION OF APPROVING THE PASSAGE OF AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 198.013 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADDITIONAL ONE-HALF OF ONE PERCENT (1/2%) INCOME TAX FOR THE PAYMENTS OF COST FOR HIRING, CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT, AND TRAINING OF PERSONNEL OF THE FIRE DIVISION AND POLICE DIVISION OF THE CITY OF WILLARD, AND THE PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT FOR SAID DIVISIONS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY,** was presented by Council President for its first reading by title only. This was done by the Council Clerk.

Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that the Resolution be declared an emergency measure and the rule requiring it to lay over for 7 days be waived. In a called vote, Babcock, Daniel, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson, and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that the rules be suspended, and the Resolution adopted on its first reading. In a called vote, Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson, and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that the Resolution be adopted. In a called vote, Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson, and Sattig voted yea. Motion adopted.

**ORDINANCE. NO. 5934-23**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 198.013 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADDITIONAL ONE-HALF OF ONE PERCENT (1/2%) INCOME TAX FOR THE PAYMENT OF COST FOR HIRING, CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT, AND TRAINING OF PERSONNEL OF THE FIRE DIVISION AND POLICE DIVISION OF THE CITY OF WILLARD, AND THE PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT FOR SAID DIVISIONS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY,**  was presented by Council President for its first reading by title only. This was done by the Council Clerk.

Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that the Ordinance be declared an emergency measure and the rule requiring it to lay over for 7 days be waived. In a called vote, Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson, and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

Moved by Olson seconded by Babcock that the Ordinance be adopted, In a called vote Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson, and Sattig voted yea. Motion adopted.

**COUNCIL/MAYOR COMMENTS:**

Mayor Daniel- remembered past Councilmen, Larry Jacobs.

Elmlinger- stated that we need to spread the word and educate the public on the Safety Service Levy.

Moved by Olson, seconded by Babcock that Council adjourn. In a called vote therein Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, Olson, and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

President of Council Clerk of Council