
**CITY OF CARLISLE COUNCIL – WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023
CARLISLE COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CARLISLE, OHIO**

Mayor Winkler called the Carlisle, Ohio City Council Work Session of Tuesday, December 13, 2022, to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Carlisle Town Hall building, 760 Central Avenue, Carlisle, Ohio with the following members in attendance:

Council Attendees:

Mr. William Bicknell
Mr. Tim Humphries
Mr. Jason Faulkner

Mrs. Debbie Kemper
Mr. Chris Stivers
Mayor Randy Winkler

Staff members present: City Manager Julie Duffy, Finance Director Ryan Rushing, Clerk of Council Jennie Harover

Discussion Items:

May 2, 2023 Special Ballot Issue

General discussion was made regarding a proposed additional 0.5% income tax for the May 2, 2023 special election and if such increase should be in support of general operations or only for police services. Key points discussed included:

- Councilmember Humphries commented that both options provide needed funds for the overall benefit of the city and that the discussion should focus on which option would be easier to get approved.
- Mayor Winkler and Councilmembers Humphries and Faulkner commented that they liked the flexibility associated with having the additional tax for general city operations and that it could be used to support the police department as well as other city functions.
- Councilmember Kemper stated that she also liked the flexibility of adding the additional tax to general operations but questioned if the voters would understand the switch from the November ballot issue which specified using the money only for police services.
- Councilmember Humphries stated that the General Fund does support the police department but could also be used to support other city services and projects.
- Mayor Winkler commented that the promotion of the levy would more than likely be heavily focused on its use to support the police department.
- Councilmember Bicknell questioned why the additional levy would be a ballot issue for general services when the money would be used for supporting the police department anyway.
- Councilmembers Bicknell and Kemper expressed concerns of switching the levy from one supporting the police department to a general services issue and worried that the voters would be confused.
- Councilmembers Kemper wondered if the November ballot failed because not enough was done to educate the voters on the issue and the needs of the police department.
- Mayor Winkler asked if Council should reach out to individuals who work on levies for guidance on the best way to promote the issue. Councilmember Debbie Kemper stated that Doug Lanier would be a good resource based on his previous experiences on similar campaigns.

- Councilmember Faulkner commented that he had previous experience with helping pass a similar general income tax increase and that it can be successfully marketed to explain to the voters how the additional monies could be used which would include supporting police services but also supporting a list of other important projects and issues.
- Councilmember Bicknell asked Councilmember Faulkner if that previous issue was presented to the voters to support one issue, then was presented on a second attempt to support a different issue. Councilmember Faulkner replied that it passed on the first attempt so no second campaign was needed.
- Councilmember Bicknell asked if that ballot issue was originally promoted to primarily support one issue. Councilmember Faulkner stated that the primary purpose of that general services issues was to support significant city infrastructure concerns but was also promoted to support all city services.
- Councilmember Bicknell commented that prior public feedback regarding the November issue included concerns related to the collection of excess monies and whether the city would use it for purposed other than supporting the police department. He wondered if moving forward with a general operations issue would be viewed by the public that the money would not be used to support the police department and be spend by the city on other matters. He also wondered if switching from an issue that limited the additional funds to only support police services to one that could be used for general services would send the wrong message to the public.
- Councilmember Humphries indicated that he spoke with Mayor Isaacs from Waynesville who successfully passed both a streets and policy ballot issue in November on what they did to get both issues passed. Mayor Isaacs indicated that the city did nothing to actively campaign and was just able to obtain enough affirmative votes for passage.
- Councilmember Stivers commented that he was not opposed to another police services ballot issue but believed that the general services issue would give Council more options for both selling the issue as well as using the funds for multiple city services - including the police department.
- Councilmember Bicknell commented that having the ballot issue strictly for police services could also be marketed to promote how the monies freed up in the General Fund could be used for other city services. He stated that he believes switching to a general services issue was a misrepresentation of how the money would be used as the majority of the additional tax would be needed to support the police department.

General discussion was made regarding next steps should the issue fail on May 2nd. Key points discussed included:

- Mayor Winkler asked if Council would consider reducing the tax credit as was discussed prior to the November ballot issue.
- Councilmember Kemper indicated that something would need to be done.
- Councilmember Faulkner indicated that he would not be in favor of reducing the tax credit. He indicated that he was committed to passing the issue and believed that it could be successfully marketed to do so with a general services issue as it gives the group more options to market
- Councilmember Bicknell commented that having a police services issue could be successfully marketed in a manner that both was transparent to the public that the money would be used to

support the police department but would free up other monies that could be used for other city projects.

Discussion was made regarding if having a dedicated police services issue would potentially provide an excessive of fund reserve balance that could only be used for police services. Key points made included:

- Councilmember Faulkner questioned if having an additional income tax for police services would bring in more long-term money that would be needed by the department.
- Councilmember Bicknell commented that he did not see that as an issue due to the constant rising costs of operating a police department.
- Councilmember Kemper commented that the community would need more police officers in the future to accommodate the growth of the community. Councilmember Faulkner commented that there is a limit to the number of officers needed for a town of our size.
- Councilmember Humphries asked staff if they had any comments about the discussion. Mr. Rushing indicated that there is always a possibility that a dedicated police services issue could generate a large fund reserve balance but that there was a difference between probability and possibility.
- Mrs. Duffy commented that the needs of the police department was one of on-going operational expenses. She commented that one-time projects such as paving, infrastructure and sidewalks could be decided each year based upon the performance of the new tax. However, any new operational expenses - such as the addition of a school resource officer - would be an on-going expenditure to the budget which may take away from the ability for the new tax increase to support additional projects.

Continued discussion was made regarding the marketing of a new ballot issue. Key points discussed included:

- Councilmember Faulkner commented that his previous experience working on the passage of the Franklin tax increase included a strong marketing campaign letting the citizens know exactly how the money would be used and then following up showing that the funds were used as promised. He commented that it took everyone to support the campaign and go out to educate the community on the importance of the issue.
- Councilmember Bicknell stated that the majority of social media comments from the November campaign questioned what would be done with the anticipated overage that the original 0.5% issue was projected raising over what the police department needed. Mrs. Duffy wondered if this concern would be better addressed by a general services ballot issue instead of one dedicated to only police services to allow Council to show how such excessive funds could be used for other necessary projects.

The group revisited the question of what next steps would be if the May 2nd ballot issue failed. Key points discussed included:

- Councilmember Bicknell stated that both he and Mayor Winkler have previously indicated that they are in support of reducing the income tax credit if the ballot issue would fail. He asked the group how many times they would put an issue on the ballot before considering the original option to reduce the income tax credit.

- Councilmember Kemper commented that she would actively support either a police services or general services income tax issue and would also work to get it passed. She commented that if the issue would fail in May then Council would need to reevaluate things and possibly make cuts.
- Councilmember Stivers commented that if the issue fails in May, then that the people have indicated that they do not want the level of police service that we currently have. He stated that he could not support a reduction in a tax credit as he personally viewed it as an increase in income tax without the support of the people.
- Councilmember Bicknell commented that the people elected them to make the necessary tough decisions to make sure their needs and emergency services were met. Councilmember Stivers commented that the people put him into office to properly spend the money the current 1.5% income tax rate produced and not to raise additional taxes without their approval. Councilmember Bicknell commented that the original issue of reducing the income tax credit was done with transparency and that it was discussed in open session several times and went through the entire three reading process with no one in the audience until the last reading.
- Councilmember Faulkner commented that he spoke to a couple of people during the November campaign, including a police officer from another jurisdiction, who did not believe that the Carlisle police department needed any additional monies. He indicated that a general services ballot issue would give better options to market to both individuals who believed the police department needed more money as well as those who believed they did not.
- Mayor Winkler commented that he spoke to a Carlisle resident who worked for the City of Franklin's Court who wanted the Franklin Police Department to patrol Carlisle streets. He commented that the Franklin Police Department does not have enough officers to patrol Carlisle streets.
- Councilmember Faulkner commented that, although Councilmember Kilpatrick could not attend the work session, he had indicated that he was in support of the general services ballot issue for the reasons discussed this evening.
- Mayor Winkler commented that the two on-duty police officers had to leave the previous night's employee Christmas dinner to answer several calls. He commented that he believes that there is more going on in this community than people realize and that he is not comfortable allowing the level of services to drop below what we currently have. He commented that our community is growing with the number of houses and subdivisions still under construction. He believed that the community expects all emergency services to show up when called and that they are expected to have the necessary equipment and training to provide support when needed.
- Councilmember Faulkner commented that he did not believe that anyone on Council disagreed with the mayor's comment but that it was an issue about which bucket the money should go into.
- Mayor Winkler stated that he will never tell the Police Chief that he must reduce his staff. He stated that he spoke with Sheriff Sims who indicated that the Sheriff's office does not have the ability to cover Carlisle and that Carlisle needs to maintain their own police department.
- Mayor Winkler expressed concerns of any ballot issue being approved by the Carlisle voters as the town has a history of generally not supporting local tax issues. He indicated that he will actively work with the group to knock on doors and actively promote the ballot issue. He stated that he was not willing to let the level of services drop and would also support a reduced tax credit if the May issue would fail.
- Councilmember Faulkner commented that the General Fund supports more services than just the police department and believed that other cuts could be made should the issue fail in May.
- Councilmember Humphries commented that he wanted the group to approach the May issue with the idea that there is not back-up option if it fails to motivate both Council and the community to support the issue.

Discussion concluded with Council deciding to proceed with the second reading on both ballot options during the regular session and make a final decision on which option would be placed on the May ballot at December 20th Council meeting when all members were present.

Council Photos

Mrs. Duffy informed Council that the city had entered into an agreement with a local photographer, Tangie Taylor, to take photographs of the various city buildings, parks and community events for use on the city's website, social media pages, and general printed use. She stated that part of her services will be to take new Council headshots to replace those in the Town Hall lobby as well as on the city's website.

Mrs. Duffy provided two possible dates that work with Mrs. Taylor's schedule – December 21st or 22nd. Councilmember Stivers indicated that he worked both dates and would not be available. Councilmember Kemper questioned if the photos could be done on January 10th prior to the Council meeting that evening. Mayor Winkler indicated that the first meeting of the year was generally a long meeting due to the annual reorganization of boards and commission. Mrs. Duffy indicated that she would reach out to Mrs. Taylor and see what other dates might work and get back with Council.

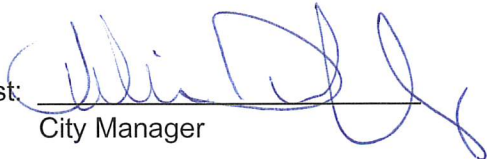
Adjournment:

With no further business, Council adjourned the meeting by voice vote with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Attest:

City Manager



Date:

1-10-23

Mayor

