

# Wellston City Council

## Meeting Minutes

### August 3, 2023

Meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by President Rick Hudson by asking Council and others in attendance to stand for the Pledge. He then called for the roll call.

Councilpersons answering the roll call included: Matti Vance; Fred Duby; Lynley Carey; Teresa Ponn-Lemaster; Walter Norris; and Roaby Browning. Angela Spangler was absent.

**Excusal of Previous Absence(s)-** All those in attendance voted to excuse the absence of Browning from the previous meeting.

#### Public Comments

- Phillip Dysard, who is a Representative of Palmer Energy Company and resides at 5577 Airport Highway, Toledo, came to speak on the aggregation programs as reflected in Ordinances 2023-47 and 2023-48. He stated Palmer Energy has worked with the Jackson County Commissioners for several years. The Commissioners have decided to place aggregation on the ballot for the unincorporated portions of the County. He explained aggregation gives groups of residents the ability to purchase at bulk rate pricing and furthered the more households that are on the program, the better the pricing. If Council passes the 2 Ordinances, they would be placed on the November Ballot; if the majority vote is achieved in November, Wellston would join the unincorporated households and create the Jackson County Program (JCP). Palmer Energy would then shop for rates. If passed, anyone not wishing to be in the JCP would have to opt-out. Only Columbia Gas and AEP direct customers are eligible; households receiving assistance plans are not eligible. Electric generation has gone from 7.4 cents to 11.2 cents per kW-h. He stated a suburb in the Dayton area just achieved 6.57 cents per kW-h. The Jackson County Program would include small businesses as well. To be considered, small businesses would have to use less than 700,000 kW-h annually and not be a national mercantile account. Palmer serves over 300 communities in the State of Ohio, the CCAO, and the Ohio Municipal League. Dysard stated customers should see an average yearly savings of approximately \$80 with both gas and electric aggregation. President Hudson offered to set this matter before a Committee, however the Mayor said the 2 pieces of legislation would need to be passed as an Emergency the same evening to make the deadline to be placed on the November Ballot. Hudson stated it felt rushed and Palmer Energy should have visited Council weeks ago so a proper discussion could be had. Dysard said it could always be placed on the Spring Ballot.

**Minutes-** All those in attendance voted to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2023, meeting.

#### Correspondence

- Chic-n-Sassy, 107 S. Ohio Avenue, has invited Council members and the public to a ribbon-cutting.
- Council was made aware of Peg Barber's resignation as City Treasurer. Mayor Brenner provided that the Republican Caucus would be meeting to appoint a Treasurer.
- Council was made aware of the appointment of David McWilliams as acting Auditor.

### **Reports of Special Committees**

- Finance- Spangler
- Health & Safety- Lemaster
- Public Service- Browning
- Planning Committee- Carey
- Community Action Liaison- Browning
- Recreation- Norris

### **Old Business- none**

### **New Business- none**

### **Legislation**

- Lemaster made a Motion to Direct the Council Clerk to correct any scrivener's errors in Resolution No. 2023-42 and Resolution No. 2023-43 so that the references to the amounts of revenue generated per \$100,000 of appraised value matches the amounts set forth in the Certificates of County Auditor's Estimated Property Tax that are part of each Resolution. Vance seconded the Motion. After discussion, President Hudson decided it would be safer to Suspend the Rules and called for a Motion. Lemaster made the Motion to Suspend the Rules and it was seconded by Vance. The motions were approved by all in attendance.
- Second Reading of Resolution No. 2023-44- A Resolution of the City of Wellston to partner with the Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA) at no cost to the City. Sponsor: Lemaster  
Discussion: During First Reading, John Stabler presentation during public comments; Brenner added that the City needs to embrace Recreational Tourism. It was decided this Resolution would be passed as an Emergency next meeting; No additional discussion during Second Reading.  
A Motion to Suspend the Rules was made Lemaster, seconded by Browning, and approved by all in attendance.  
A Motion to Adopt and Pass was made by Vance, seconded by Browning, and approved by all in attendance.
- First Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-47- An Ordinance authorizing all actions necessary to affect a Governmental Electricity Aggregation Program with Opt-Out Provisions pursuant to Section 4928.20 of the Ohio Revised Code, directing the Jackson County Board of Elections to submit a Ballot Question to the Electors and Declaring an Emergency.  
Sponsor: No Sponsor; This Ordinance is dead.  
Discussion: Public Comments by Dysard. The Mayor reminded Council that passage of the 2023-47 and 2023-48 would only place these issues on the November Ballot. Council

agreed it would be best to wait to see how the County's Aggregation Program works out if it received the majority vote in the upcoming election.

- First Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-48- An Ordinance authorizing all actions necessary to affect a Governmental Natural Gas Aggregation Program with Opt-Out Provisions pursuant to Section 4929.26 of the Ohio Revised Code, directing the Jackson County Board of Elections to submit a Ballot Question to the Electors and Declaring an Emergency.

Sponsor: No Sponsor: This Ordinance is dead.

Discussion: Made with 2023-47

- First Reading of Resolution No. 2023-49- A Resolution authorizing the Mayor of the City of Wellston to prepare and submit an application to participate in the Ohio Valley Development Commission's (OVRDC) 2023 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and to execute contracts as required, and Declaring an Emergency.

Browning found a mistake in the Legislation. Lemaster made a Motion to Remove Section 3 of Resolution 2023-49, Browning seconded, and all in attendance voted in the affirmative.

Sponsor: Vance

Discussion: This is a grant that is being submitted to work on Deadman's Curve.

A Motion to Suspend the Rules was made by Lemaster, seconded by Browning, and approved by all in attendance.

A Motion to Adopt and Pass was made by Vance, seconded by Carey, and approved by all in attendance.

- First Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-50- An Ordinance for the Transfer of Funds from the 201 Fire Fund to the New Equipment Fund and the Repairs-Motor Vehicle Fund and Declaring an Emergency.

Sponsor: Vance

Discussion: There was an accident on January 6<sup>th</sup> with the Ladder Truck. It was damaged leaving the station on the way to an emergency. Chief Pelletier stated there is only 7-inches of clearance and the damage was upwards of \$150,000. Insurance will take care of most of that, but the City will be responsible for roughly \$8,000. This bill is due. The rest is to spend grant money which was received from the State and will be used to purchase fire hose.

A Motion to Suspend the Rules was made by Browning, seconded by Vance, and approved by all in attendance.

A Motion to Adopt and Pass was made by Browning, seconded by Norris, and approved by all in attendance.

- First Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-51- An Ordinance for Transfer of Funds from the 212 Fire Levy Fund to purchase personal protective equipment for the Fire Department and Declaring an Emergency.

Sponsor: Browning

Discussion: Chief Pelletier said there is \$10,000 in the Fire Levy Fund that is used for turn-out gear. This gear has a shelf-life of 6 years. The Chief uses a rotation, giving each fireman 3 new sets every five years to keep the cost between \$10-12,000. This is carryover. A Motion to Suspend the Rules was made by Norris, seconded by Browning, and approved by all in attendance.

A Motion to Adopt and Pass was made by Lemaster, seconded by Browning, and approved by all in attendance.

### **Mayor**

- The cannon work will begin in a week. After the welding, it will power washed and then painted in preparation for the Sesquicentennial.
- The Sewer Project is ongoing. A meeting was held with DLZ earlier that day. There has been no funding secured at this point to pave the road; however, he plans on applying for grants in October. The Mayor noticed there has been \$175,000 set aside to pave a small section of the road that will have to be dug back up eventually. The project is now put on hold to possibly skip a step and obtain quotes for overlaying the whole road. Brenner expects the cost to reach \$200,000, but this will ultimately save the City time and money.
- Plans had been made to pave A Street all the way up to the Cemetery, but that has been put on hold as well because it would be more beneficial to pave Broadway and New York “while we’re digging it up versus leaving it open all winter and hoping to obtain paving money next year.”
- Take-aways from the Sewer Project meeting today include: 8 sewer pipes that go directly into storm drains; many pipes were discovered that had unknown origins; and a sewer line in the middle of the road that no one knew existed.
- It is Grant Season. The next big push is the AMLER grant. Support letters will be sought.
- There was a meeting with DLZ for the Appalachian Community Grant projects earlier that day and the day before with Sam Brady of Jackson County Economic Development Partnership. Mayor Brenner then invited members of Council to look at the plans that have been prepared for the projects. The projects include: The Bike Path, RV Park, and Farmer’s Market; there have been no provided plans for the Louvee to date.
- A Town Hall was held the previous day to discuss the proposed way ahead for the Recreation Levy. Some folks were confused on the taxable value and calculating the proposed new millage. The Mayor estimated that most properties would pay \$50 per year. Ideas outside of a City Pool included: a Recreation Center with an indoor track, expanded bike path, and many others. If the Levy is passed, a Committee will need to be established.
- The Sesquicentennial Planning is going well and the meetings are well-attended. The daily events will be held by OHillCo. The City will handle cosmetics- trimming trees, taking care of the cannon, etc. The City if holding a Welcome Sign Contest, which will be voted on during the Festival.
- Vance asked the status of the Lions Club/Parking Lot issue. The Mayor said he has been so busy that it not been revisited at this point. There was more discussion as to downtown parking, possible solutions, and number of spots per businesses/apartments. Vance reminded everyone that Legislation has already been passed for a downtown parking lot.

### **Service Director**

- Preparations are being made to ready downtown for OHillco. Trees will be cut down.
- Lemaster asked Camp to check out the bushes on Broadway. She said they limit visibility. Hudson said there is one that is overgrown and almost in the road at the inoperable carwash. Norris said a tree needs trimmed coming off C Street.

### **Law Director- none**

### **Auditor- Reports Received**

**City Clerk's Reports-** Reports Received

**Treasurer's Report-** none

**Fire-** none

**Zoning-** Code Reports received

**Police-** none

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

*M. B. Ellsbaugh*  
Council Clerk



The seal is circular with a scalloped outer edge. The words "CITY COUNCIL CLERK" are at the top, "NOTARIAL SEAL" are in the center, "STATE OF OHIO" are at the bottom, and "WELLSTON, OHIO" are at the bottom. In the center is a small circular emblem featuring a rising sun over water.

*R. J. Johnson*  
Council President