

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

London City Council

Held
20 S. Walnut Street, London, Ohio 43140

20

December 15, 2022 at 6:30pm

Call to Order- President Comer led the members and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance, and a moment of reflection.

Roll Call Eades-here, Peters-Here, Robinson-Here, Hays-Present, Hitt-Here, Stahl-Present

Minutes – President Comer asked for a Voice Vote to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Hearing- President Comer announced there will be two public hearings. Councilman Hays motion to enter into Public Hearings. Councilman Hitt seconded the motion.

Roll Call – Eades-Yes, Peters-Yes, Robinson-Yes, Hays-Yes, Hitt-Yes, Stahl-Yes.

Ordinance 204-22 - Sponsored by Andrew Hitt - An Ordinance amending official zoning map

Councilman Hitt advises that this is for the property located on W High Street at Cherry, bounded by the Railroad tracks and First Street.

Robert Minner- 246 E High Street – He purchased the property at 130 W High Street 2.5 years ago. He knows there is more demand for storage facilities in the City. He knows that it is not the prettiest thing. He hopes to develop the property that has sat vacant for 25 years.

Ordinance 205-22 - Sponsored by John Stahl - An Ordinance amending official zoning map

Councilman Stahl advises this is for the property bordered by Center, Maple and the Ohio to Erie Bike Trail to put in a bed & breakfast.

Alan Knowles-271 Hume Dr – He is asking for the Zoning change to put in a Bed & Breakfast that will cater to Trail Traffic and Bike Tourism, and others.

President Comer- How many rooms will it have? Mr Knowles- It will have four bedrooms.

Councilman Eades- Where exactly will this be located? Is there enough room at that location? Do you foresee any traffic problems? Mr. Knowles – It is in the point across the street from the M & M diner. There is enough room as it is a 1 acre lot. He does not expect any traffic problems.

Councilman Hays moved to exit the Public Hearing. Stahl seconded.

Roll Call – Eades-Yes, Peters-Yes, Robinson-Yes, Hays-Yes, Hitt-Yes, Stahl-Yes.

Communications/Announcements

President Comer advises there is an application for a Liquor License renewal for the London Food Mart.

Councilman Eades asked if there is anyone from the Police Department in attendance, and if there are any known problems at the London Food Mart

President Comer called for a voice vote to approve the liquor license renewal. The renewal was unanimously approved.

Motion to approve City Council Clerk Appointment – President Comer introduced Erika Watkinson who he feels would be a good City Council Clerk.

Ms. Watkinson introduced herself by telling the Members that she is a Life Ling resident, and a local realtor. She answered questions from the Council members, and advised that she did not feel her job would not interfere with her duties as Clerk, and she is aware of the evening committee meetings.

President Comer called for a Voice vote to approve Ms. Watkinson. Motion approved unanimously, and she will start in January.

Approval of Ward 3 Representative President Comer advises that the Madison County Republican had met and did not appoint anyone. He spoke with the Secretary of State's office

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

today, and with Jennifer Hitt. They agree that we have 30 days from when the Madison county Central Committee met, so we have until our January 5th meeting. We will put this on the City website, and notify the Messenger. Applicants can email him. He will have Council members help with the interviews.

President Comer advises that Mayor Closser submitted a list of people to be appointed to various boards or commissions. The Committees and appointees: Metro Housing Board – Angela Eden, Board of Zoning & Appeals – Zahid Siddiqi, Historic Review Board – Robert Baengle, Davis Mars, Lisa Jackman, Historic Downtown Review Board- Shannon Treynor, David Mars, Wayne Roberts, Jackie Call, Parks & Recreation Sara Mars, Income Tax Review – Tom Cox.

President Comer called for a Voice Vote and it was unanimously approved.

Audience Concerns

Margie Cooper- She has issues with the traffic lights being taken out, as she has almost been hit twice since then. She is worried about the Police and Fire, why don't we have enough money. Why hasn't anyone brought more businesses to this town in the last 7 years? She cannot go in 90% of the businesses since she is handicapped. There are broken sidewalks and potholes. She has to be into the street to get around this town. When is someone going to start helping people? The town is falling apart. Aren't peoples lives more important than a basketball courts and raises.

Anita Likens 157 E First St – What we have tonight is local involvement. I would love to see this kind of involvement every meeting.

Michael Norman 188 S Oak Street – He attended the BOPU meeting and wants to know who makes the decision if Aqua can come look at the facilities. He would like like to see a neutral committee make this decision. Also when it comes to the pay raises of elected officials he also feels there could be a Citizens review committee to make recommendations.

President Comer advises that the pay raises to go the title or positions, not to the people that are currently in them. The raises would not take effect until the next term that starts in 2024. He also thinks that the decision to allow Aqua would go to the Safety Service Director.

Safety Service Director Rex Castle advises that he is not over the BOPU so he would not have any part of the decision. It would ultimately be up to Council after a recommendation by the BOPU.

Councilman Hays advises that the question about allowing an outside company such as Aqua to look at the facilities and submit a letter of interest has been turned over to the Law Director for review.

Tommy Boyd 48 N Union Street- He feels that the grant to tear down the middle school could probably be found again. Could we possibly be able to use the current recreation center for another year? He feels \$100,000 could fix the problems for the time being.

SSD Rex Castle – Grants are never guaranteed. We felt fortunate to get the grant. Madison County was awarded \$500,000, and London was the only community to apply for it.

Councilman Robinson- What happens if we pull permits and a child gets hurt in there while we are working on repairs? There is plaster falling off the walls.

SSD Rex Castle - There are safety hazards in the old school. Not necessarily on the Gym. We had a Structural engineer look at it and he felt that the gym was safe enough. What happens f the old school falls and hurts someone? If we repaired it we would have to bring everything up to code, and it would probably be 1.5 million, not \$100,000.

President Comer- We should build something that is worthy of the City of London, not a pole barn with two basketball courts.

David Kell – Madison Futures Inc- The goal is to use the CIC (Community Investment Corporation) because it speeds of the process since there is not a bidding process, and because it helps save 25-33%, as we do not have to pay prevailing wages and taxes on materials.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

Casto & Hark Inc. Form S-301 E14756921.D
 Councilman Hays – If we approve this and you build it, how much of a savings can we expect compared to doing it ourselves?/ Kell- I have some preliminary numbers, but I don't have them with me. I would expect about a 30% savings.

Councilman Hitt- How much of that savings is because you don't have to pay prevailing wages?/Kell- About half of that, so about 15%.

President Comer- People are telling me that they believe using the CIC lets the City circumvent having a levy to pay for this./Kell- I haven't heard that.

Councilman Eades- How many buildings has the CIC worked with the County on, and how was your experience?/Kell- The CIC did three buildings for the County and Summerford Township. We worked with a company out of Kenton, and they seemed to go well.

Councilman Eades – So you will be controlling the payments to the contractors, but we are controlling the money by issuing the bonds?/ Kell- Correct

Councilman Eades – How does the lease work?/Kell- The County attorney and the City attorney have worked out the lease. We will lease the land for a nominal fee, and we would be in control of the property while the building is being built. Once it is built we would cancel the lease and the City would be in control of the property and the building.

Councilman Eades- As mentioned at the last Council meeting, this circumvents the process by not having bidding, and not paying prevailing wages, which means avoiding unions, and you can hire who you want./Kell- Yes, the CIC can do this.

Councilman Peters – How many people do you think will be working on the job site, since the income tax would stay in the City/Kell- I have no idea.

Steven Miller 225 Jenkinson Ave – Would like to thank Mr. Long and the Parks department for planting the trees that needed to be replanted near his property. Has questions about the process to appoint someone to council for ward 3. He feels that Michael Norman would be good for that seat. He has created a website to help explain things in the city, he helps me look up things, he has been acting as a Rep for me already. If you want someone who will work as hard as Anthony Smith did, it will be Michael Norman.

Council President Comer explained the process as: The Republican Central Committee had the obligation to fill the seat, and they met on December 6th. When they did not fill the seat then City Council has until January 5th. If Council does not fill the seat it will go to Mayor Closser.

Andrea Dillion- 66 East Fifth Street – Distributed a copy of a letter that she had signed by residents that states: We the people of London do not feel that now is the right time to build a new gymnasium. We feel the City needs to focus first on infrastructure, funding of the Fire Department and Police Department, and getting the East High Street water treatment facility running. She has 48 signatures. (attached). She is 100% in favor of a new rec center. She spoke to Robert Burns and the debt service would currently be \$208,000 for 26-30 years. We have been told that it will be tens of millions of dollars to fix the storm sewers, and the Fire Police and Water plant should all take precedent. It troubles her that the metal building will not be bid out. With a recession taking place, how much more can people take on?

She also read a letter from Ann Beathard that stated Ann feels there are more pressing issues about the infrastructure. She wonders if the FD has been audited. Would like to see separate levies for Fire police and Recreation, and would prefer they not be permanent levies, and feels the 12% raises are too much.

Melody Earles 71 Laurel Street – A lot of people in her generation don't have computers, and they don't know what is going. Why isn't there more being published. Why can't they print out the minutes and put them in the water bill?

Mayor Closser pointed out that print newspapers do not have the staff they used to. They are welcome to come to any meetings and report on things.

Andrea Dillion – Can we go ahead and demolish the building and leave it that way and work out something with the school and the churches to use their gyms?

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

Civil & Harris Inc. Form S-301-FH412891D
 Marilyn Krivich 358 Bishop Drive – If we can use the schools for a year, why cant we continue to use those while we get everything else done, the police, the fire. My family only has so much coming in a month. The City needs to prioritize.

Councilman Eades read an email from Autumn Fagnan – They are new to London, and she has become a full blown sports mom in a year. She is deeply disappointed that there is even talk about moving forward without a new rec center.

President Comer read an email from Virginia Alder – She is totally against both the pay raises and building. There needs to be a look at what is necessary and what is a want. Her biggest concern is a facebook post by Tammy that the kids shoes would tear up floors at churches. The taxes are getting out of hand. Let's fix the broken and the needs.

Councilman Peters read an email from Tabitha Kaufman- Unable to attend due to her child's basketball game. There are several gyms that could be used, the need for a building does not outweigh the need for infrastructure repairs such as drainage, the Fire & Ems, and the Cities water. She sometimes smells sewage when running water, and she has to purchase bottled water. She seems more housing in London, but you cannot build on a broken foundation. Regarding the raises, not one of the hard working citizens has received a 30% pay increase, then another 12% 2 years later. The City even removed the 0.5% Tax credit and added fees to the water bill for storm sewers that have not been fixed. How can Council discuss a new building when infrastructure hasn't been fixed. How can council think that future levies will be passed if the 2.8 million is used for a building.

Councilman Eades read an email from Michelle Davis – Vote no on the basketball court. The citizens have already voted on this. This is an absurd price. Present plans for a building that everyone can use. Doesn't the Fire department need money? Quit asking us to dig deeper. Vote no on the raises. Ask the tax payers and put it on the ballot. Also on the new legislation about the grass fines. This needs further thought. It's not very neighborly. Have some compassion for peoples' situations. \$75 to the poor means everything. Show the voters that you care.

Committee Reports

Councilman Stahl – Attended Finance and Safety Committees – Read Fire Chief's report.

Councilman Hitt – Attended Safety Committee – Read Police Chief's Report. Highlights: Sgt Linda Sullivan is retiring in January. Officer Orahood has been promoted to Sargeant. Officer Langham has been named the School Resource Officer.

Councilman Hays – Attended the Safety Committee and the Board of Public Utilities meeting. Highlights- Safety Committee- Keny Station apartments has been through the Planning Commission, and will be coming to Council at the next meeting, with a Public hearing scheduled February 16th. BOPU- Burgess & Niple has been awarded the contract to complete the upgrades at the Water Plant. The screw Press at the Waste Water plant is out for bid. Aqua did send a letter to the BOPU, and that has been turned over to the Law Director. A test well was dug at 275 feet and it also has ammonia in it. Another test well will be dug between 425-500 feet.

Councilman Robinson – Attended Service Committee – Highlights. Street Department has completed many tasks in the last month, including hanging Christmas lights and cleaning up trash on Lafayette Street. The electric vehicle charging stations have been completed. The Rec department has 297 kids playing basketball at the Community center. The leagues will run until January 14th. Spring Volleyball will be held at London city schools.

Councilman Peters- Nothing

Councilman Eades – Attended Service and Finance Committees. There is a new piece of legislation to take an Income Tax increase of 0.25% to the ballot to fund the Fire Department.

City Official Reports

Mayor Closser participated in the program with Madison County Board of Disabilities. Thanked everyone who helped support Shop with a Cop". Met with people with the Governor's office,

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

Rep. Mike Carey's office and the AG's office and will continue to meet with them to make sure the City knows about funding opportunities. 20

Old BusinessTabled Items

- Ordinance 146-22 - Sponsored by Anthony Smith - An Ordinance amending section 1048.05 of the Codified Ordinances – NO action taken, **LEFT ON TABLE**
- Ordinance 147-22 - Sponsored by Anthony Smith - An Ordinance amending section 1042 of the Codified Ordinances (attachment) NO Action taken, **LEFT ON TABLE**
- Ordinance 151-22 - Sponsored by Rich Hays - An Ordinance amending official zoning (attachment) Mayor Closser advises that he met with Jim Hilz of the Pulte Group. They will be making a slight change from 256 homes to 255 homes. Hopefully they will be finalizing the contract with the Landowner soon. **LEFT ON TABLE**

5th Reading

- Ordinance 204-22 - Sponsored by Andrew Hitt - An Ordinance amending official zoning map (attachment) Councilman Hitt – This will change the property from an M-1 to a PUD, and is the property located between W High and W First Streets.

Motion to Adopt by Stahl. Seconded by Hitt.

Roll Call – Eades-Yes, Peters-Yes, Robinson-Yes, Hays-Yes, Hitt-Yes, Stahl-Yes.

MOTION ADOPTED

- Ordinance 205-22 - Sponsored by John Stahl - An Ordinance amending official zoning map (attachment) Councilman Stahl – This is the land at Center and Maple Streets. The bed and breakfast is proposed there.

Motion to adopt by Stahl. Second by Hays.

Roll Call – Eades-Yes, Peters-Yes, Robinson-Yes, Hays-Yes, Hitt-Yes, Stahl-Yes.

MOTION ADOPTED**Old Business 3rd Reading**

- Ordinance 212-22 - Sponsored by John Stahl - An Ordinance amending section 660 of the Codified Ordinances

Councilman Stahl advises this has to do with the mowing of grass, and a \$75 fee can now be charged.

Councilman Hitt – What is the height requirement that a lawn has to be mowed? /SSD Castle – Believes the requirement is 10 inches. Also there is a correction - The first offense a notice will be sent. If it is not taken care then we will have it moved. No further notices will be sent, and the 2nd time and every time after that, we will charge \$75. We hope this is a deterrent.

Motion to Adopt by Stahl. Second by Hitt.

Roll Call – Eades-Yes, Peters-Yes, Robinson-Yes, Hays-Yes, Hitt-Yes, Stahl-Yes

MOTION ADOPTED

- Ordinance 215-22 - Sponsored by Josh Peters - An Ordinance to make appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the City of London, State of Ohio, during the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

Councilman Peters – This is the 2023 Expense budget. The General fund budget is \$6,377,620 and the total budget is \$21,824,452.

Held

20

Councilman Eades – Moved to table until after 216-22 and 217-22 are decided. Died for lack of second.

Councilman Peters motion to adopt. Hitt seconded the motion.

Roll Call – Eades-No, Peters-Yes, Robinson-Yes, Hays-Yes, Hitt-Yes, Stahl-Yes

MOTION ADOPTED.

- Resolution 216-22 - Sponsored by Josh Peters - A Resolution authorizing the Safety Service Director to enter into contract with Madison County Future Inc. (attachment)

Councilman Peters – David Kell spoke about this earlier. This is to lease the land to build the building.

Councilman Eades – We have heard from a lot of people. I think the Fire Dept has to be our priority, as we could have to fund them by \$500-\$800K next year, and this would also be another \$200K+. Since the interest rates have actually held steady or went down a little, I think it buys us time.

Councilman Peters- Our priority needs to be the Fire Dept. I would like to see a new Community Center. I think the school will help us out. Since it is 16-18 months to build we may only miss 1 season.

President Comer – We do need to prioritize, our Fire and Police. We should take more time and listen to the community about what they want. This should be on the ballot as it's own issue. Instead of building a pole barn, that we can add another pole barn to it.

Councilman Hitt- Is there any reason we shouldn't table this until after the levy?

Councilman Peters – I think we should vote. If it passes, it passes. If not, we can bring it up again after the levy.

Councilman Peters moved to adopt. Stahl seconded.

Roll call – Stahl-No, Hitt- Yes, Hays- No, Robinson-yes, Peters-No, Eades-No

Motion failed.

- Ordinance 217-22 - Sponsored by Josh Peters - An Ordinance providing the issuance of not to exceed \$3,000,000 of bonds by the City of London, Ohio, for the purpose of financing a portion of the costs of the acquisition and construction of a new city gymnasium, and matters related to such bonds, and declaring an emergency.

Councilman Peters – This is now a moot point.

Councilman Robinson- Motion to adopt. Second by Peters.

Roll call – Stahl-No, Hitt- Yes, Hays- No, Robinson-yes, Peters-No, Eades-No

Motion failed.

- Ordinance 218-22 – Sponsored by Josh Peters – An Ordinance authorizing elected officials and appointed officials wage adjustments

Councilman Peters – This is a 12% raise to elected and appointed Officials, starting in January 2024.

Council President Comer – Feels this is not the right time. We are Public Officials, and we knew what we were getting into.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

Auditor Kenna Combs – Wants to address misinformation that has been on Social media, and with Ann Beathard’s letter, and here. The figures sound Astronomous, but the 12% is taking in consideration 4 years, so it is really 3% a year.

Councilman Eades – The pay raise is in consideration of the last 4 years, since the last pay raise was put in place.

Councilman Peters – Motion to adopt. Second by Stahl.

Roll call – Eades-No, Peters-No, Robinson-yes, Hays-No, Hitt-abstained, Stahl-No

Motion failed.

New Business

- Ordinance 219-22- Sponsored by: Greg Eades - AN ORDINANCE TO INCREASE THE MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX BY TWENTY FIVE HUNDREDTHS OF ONE PERCENT (0.25%) PER ANNUM FOR A CONTINUING PERIOD OF TIME, COMMENCING JULY 1, 2023, OF WHICH INCREASE (I) ONE QUARTER OF ONE PERCENT (0.25%) PER ANNUM SHALL BE USED FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING FUNDS TO PAY COSTS OF ACQUIRING, CONSTRUCTING, FURNISHING, EQUIPPING, IMPROVING, MAINTAINING, AND REPAIRING MUNICIPAL FIRE DEPARTMENT FACILITIES, TO PAY GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, AND TO PAY ANY EXPENSES AND DEBT SERVICE CHARGES FOR DEBT INCURRED IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Councilman Eades – The Fire Department will be short, and after two other attempts have failed. This council, Administration and the Fire Chief feels this is the best way at this time.

Councilman Hitt- How much will this generate? SSD Castle – Since the 0.5% generates 2.4 million, this will generate 1.2 million.

LEFT ON for 2nd READING

- Resolution 220-22- Sponsored By: Greg Eades-A RESOLUTION TO PLACE THE ISSUE OF INCREASING THE MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX BY TWENTY-FIVE HUNDREDTHS OF ONE PERCENT (0.25%) PER ANNUM FOR A CONTINUING PERIOD OF TIME AS PROVIDED IN ORDINANCE NO. 220-22, ON THE BALLOT AT THE ELECTION TO BE HELD ON MAY 2, 2023, AND DIRECTING THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS OF MADISON COUNTY, OHIO TO CONDUCT SUCH ELECTION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Councilman Eades - This is what puts the item on the ballot to allow people to express their views by voting.

LEFT ON FOR 2nd READING.

Round Table

Councilman Stahl- Thanked everyone for coming out. “it’s not as easy as it looks up here. Takes a lot of looking into and thinking”.

Councilman Hitt- Thanked people for showing an interest. This is the largest crowd that he has seen in 4 years of being on Council.

Councilman Hays – Thanked the city Employees. A lot of thought and prayers went into the decisions tonight. Agreed with the lady that spoke earlier, we need sewer, and water, and Police and Fire. Has spoken with Congressman Carey’s office.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

Caste & Hays, Inc. Form S-301 E1412692LD

Councilman Robinson – Appreciates everyone expressing their views. Is disappointed about the community Center but understands peoples’ reservations. 20

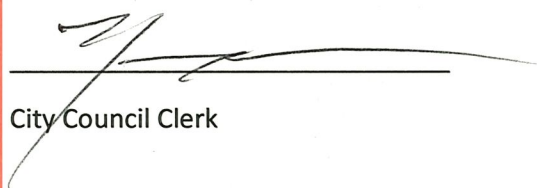
Councilman Peters – Thanked everyone for coming out, and Thanked Bob Minner and Alan Knowles for bringing their businesses to London.

Councilman Eades- Counted 24 people in the Audience, and hopes things were explained to them well enough. Thinks London is still a special place, and a place that many people call “HOME”.

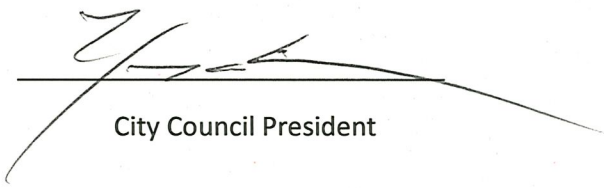
President Comer – Thanked the community and those that watch on the live stream. Encouraged everyone to get involved and get petitions to run.

President Comer also asked for a Voice vote to approve Councilman Hays at the Council representative to the BOPU. Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 924PM.



City Council Clerk



City Council President