London City Council

20 S. Walnut Street, London, Ohio 43140

September 5, 2024 at 6:30pm

Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Council President Peters at 6:30p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited with a moment of Silent Reflection.

Roll Call

Present – *President Peters, Councilman Eades, Councilman Hays, Councilman McDaniels, Councilman Hitt, Councilwoman Treynor, Councilman Stahl, Councilman Norman*

Minutes – Approval of August 15, 2024 minutes, approved by unanimous vote.

Public Hearing – none

Communications/Announcements - none

Audience Concerns – none

Committee Reports -

Personnel & Finance Committee
(Department reports are attached to committee meeting minutes.)

- *Councilman Eades – Finance committee is Monday September 9th at 530. We will be discussing fire department budget.*
- *Councilman Hitt* – none
- *Councilwoman Treynor* – none

Public Service Committee

- *Councilman Hitt – none*
- *Councilman Norman –none*
- *Councilman McDaniels –Next meeting is September 10th at 5pm*

Public Safety Committee

- *Councilman Hays* – none

- *Councilman McDaniels – Next Meeting is September 10th at 6pm*
- *Councilman Stahl* –none

City Official Reports

Mayor Closser– see attachment

Mr. Castle - reported that the renovations for the City Council and Clerk's Office have been completed. He informed Council members that their key fobs now grant access to this room, as well as to any entrances in the building between the hours of 8 AM and 8 PM, Monday through Friday. However, the key fob does not unlock the main building doors, which will remain automatically locked at all times.

Councilman Rich Hays recommended that, moving forward, the city should continue to keep the pool open for a few extra weeks at the end of the season. He emphasized the importance of maintaining this extension.

Mayor Closser responded that the key issue is staffing, specifically the availability of lifeguards. It is uncertain each year whether high school and college students, who typically fill these positions, will be able to continue working during the extended pool season.

Councilman Norman then raised two questions. He first asked if there were plans to modify the list of individuals involved in certain committees, potentially adding more citizens or removing others. He inquired whether the list would remain unchanged or if adjustments were being made.

Mayor Closser explained that in a previous email, he had indicated that if any council members wanted to serve on the committee, he would pass that information along to OHM. I heard from no one. That email was sent about a week ago.

Councilman Norman followed up, asking about the inclusion of citizens on these committees.

Mayor Closser responded that a couple of committees were involved and that the city had hired a company to conduct citizen outreach.

Councilman Norman expressed concern that by the time the public is involved, it would be too late, as the plan would already be in phase 3 out of 5 phases. He stressed that the community wouldn’t be involved until halfway through the process. He referenced phase 2, which includes a driving and walking tour, and pointed out that if they don’t include citizens in those districts early on, it might lead to an inaccurate representation of the district. He also discussed average income of our citizens and expressed that these citizens on the list make more than the average and not really represented average citizen. He strongly requested that additional citizens be added to the committees.

Mayor Closser asked how many more people would he wantto be added to the committees, noting that sometimes its harder to get things done with too many people.

Councilman Norman suggested adding four more citizens, with one from each ward.

Mayor Closser stated there are citizens from each ward. Mayor then questioned how he knew the income levels of those already on the committee. There are people that don't make as much as others. The council knows how much I make and about average as you stated. He then asked if he wants 4 more

Councilman Norman stated 4 more citizens who aren't connect to entity, government or work for city.

Everyone is connected. Those people on list sit on multiple boards. They don't all know each other. I listed their job so people would know what the others might do.

Councilman Norman clarified that he didn't care whether the individuals had jobs but wanted citizens who live in the area and could provide a more accurate representation. He also pointed out that some individuals listed on the committee were from the same group, such as two people from Westwood Collective.

Councilman McDaniels stated he would be willing to sign up to be part of committee

Mayor Closser corrected him, stating that there was only one person from Westwood Collective.

Councilman Norman replied that the information provided to him indicated there were two, unless changes were made afterward.

Mayor Closser acknowledged that some people had declined the invitation to join the committee.

Councilman Norman reiterated that he could only go by the information initially given to him.

Mayor Closser asked Councilman Norman to send the contact information for four citizens he believed should serve on the committee, and he would pass that on to OHM Advisors.

Councilman Norman questioned why there wasn't a public call for citizens interested in participating, stating that many people would likely want to be involved.

Mayor Closser explained that the list had been made internally.

Councilman Norman pointed out that the Mayor's executive assistant had said the Mayor wasn't the one who created the list.

Mayor Closser clarified that he did, in fact, create the list. Then OHM told me who they wanted from the list. He also stated that we are including citizens.

Councilman Norman again questioned why there wasn't a public call-out for more citizen involvement and why the committee wasn't more representative of the broader community.

Mayor Closser again requested that Councilman Norman should provide the names of four citizens, and he would pass those along to OHM. He also noted that the decision ultimately rested with OHM.

Councilman Norman asked whether OHM worked for the city or if the city worked for OHM.

President Peters interjected, explaining that it's Administrations job to manage the process. He emphasized that if they put out a public call for involvement, they could be overwhelmed with responses. The administration provides OHM with a list of potential committee members, and they then sift through that information. He noted that it's not the council's job to manage this process since the council passed legislation giving administration the authority to make these decisions.

Mr. Castle: And another thing, whenever we have these public meetings with the citizens of London, that's MORPC's job, and that's OHM's job to compile that data. They're supposed to say, "Overwhelmingly, the people think we need to do this." That data goes into the plan. You're giving stakeholders—the people who know how to get the process moving—input, but they're not the ultimate decision-makers. The citizens will be the decision-makers. If you're acting like these people are just doing whatever they want, they're not. They have to do what the data shows, and that's what will be brought forward. You told me to hire more MORPC and to spend more money for more public interaction, and that's exactly what we've done. We've followed the committee's guidelines for the comprehensive plan. If you don't like it, I'm sorry, but we're following the guidelines. It's all data-driven.

Councilman Eades: I'm just asking about timelines. OHM's timeline doesn't include anything from MORPC. So how many more meetings will the community be involved in? Looking at their timeline, there's public interaction in Step 3 and another in Step 5.

Mr. Castle: Additional community engagement support will happen during two planning workshops held by OHM Advisors. MORPC has scheduled 12 hours. We're paying them $12,000 to conduct additional workshops and provide more support. I see 18 hours of work MORPC will do, and we're paying for it—something you all approved. I signed the contracts to get this done, so I don't understand why you're upset. We are doing exactly what you wanted.

Councilman Eades: I'm not upset; I just didn't see MORPC on the original schedule.

Mr. Castle: OHM gave their initial schedule, and we all agreed it wasn't enough public interaction. That's why we brought in MORPC to do more.

Councilman Eades: I understand now. But we're working with two separate schedules—OHM's original and then MORPC. I just wanted clarification on how much we're paying for them and what they're doing.

Mr. Castle: They're giving us 16 free hours—8 hours this year and 8 next year, as part of our membership. Then, we contracted additional hours for more engagement.

Councilman Eades: Got it. But I think there are two arguments here. One is about public involvement in the steering committee, which is what Councilman Norman seems to be focusing on. I'm just asking how many public interactions will happen and what exactly they'll include. OHM said they would create a website and a survey. I'd like the council to have some input on that survey since we talked about it last year. A public survey would help everyone.

Mr. Castle: I'd say bring that up at a public meeting, or volunteer for the committee like the mayor asked last week. No one expressed interest except Mr. McDaniels.

Councilman Eades: Hold on. What public meeting are you talking about?

Mr. Castle: There haven't been any yet. They'll happen in the future.

Councilman Eades: Okay, that clears that up.

Councilman Norman: My next question is: Why aren't these meetings public? Other cities—Columbus, for example—do this live and record it. Why did we pick a company that doesn't make these meetings public?

Mr. Castle: I didn't pick them—you, Greg, and I did.

Councilman Norman: Okay, but do they work for us, or do we work for them? If we want public meetings, why can't we just tell them? They work for the administration, but we approved the money.

Mr. Castle: Probably the reason they don't want these meetings public is they want to keep the meetings short and productive. They don't want two-hour meetings where people come in and derail the process. They've said the best committees keep meetings to an hour, maybe an hour and a half. Public interaction can make them drag on. That's why they're saving public engagement for the designated public meetings. If you want to televise or stream them, we can do that, but that might make the meetings less focused.

Councilman Norman: Public doesn't mean audience participation. There can be public meetings where the audience isn't involved.

Mr. Castle: Sure, but you know as well as I do that when the public is in the room, they'll want to ask questions and interrupt. You were at a public meeting this week—did they allow a lot of interaction?

Councilman Norman: No, but it was still a public meeting.

Mr. Castle: But in this city, we've always allowed public interaction. Our meetings have always lasted forever because of it.

Councilman Eades: Last summer, when we moved meetings to this room and seated the audience differently, it helped control the flow. There wasn't as much open discussion.

Mr. Castle: Exactly. That's why they suggest not allowing audience interaction—it makes the meetings too long. But if you want future meetings to be recorded, I have no problem with that. We'll make sure OHM is okay with it, too.

Councilman Norman: Thank you. And we should make sure they're available on the city website without requiring a records request.

Mr. Castle: We can do that.

Councilman Norman: One more question. Someone from my ward, who is involved with the Strawberry Festival, asked: Who decides on changes to the festival format? Who makes that decision?

Mr. Castle: That decision was made collectively by the police chief, fire chief, the mayor, and myself. It's all about public safety and downtown safety.

Councilman Norman: So, we had public meetings where we set the festival parameters, like keeping First Street open. The Strawberry Festival wanted to extend past that, but the administration said no. Fast forward to this weekend, and now there's an exception being made.

Mayor Closser: This weekend, we're keeping Second Street open to help the downtown businesses. On Saturdays, a lot of non-retail businesses—like hair salons and realtors—need easy access for clients. So, we're trying to find a balance between helping businesses and holding events.

Councilman Norman: But you can see how the Strawberry Festival feels slighted—they were hardlined, but now exceptions are being made.

Mayor Closser: If the Strawberry Festival wanted to adjust to leave Second Street open, we wouldn't have had an issue with that. The goal is to keep things safe while also helping the downtown businesses.

Councilman Norman: So, festival setup is negotiable?

Mayor Closser: We're always open to discussions. But keep in mind, this weekend's event is only from 8 to 2, and we're only closing the roads for six hours. When you're talking about a 48 to 72-hour closure for festivals, that's a different conversation.

Councilman Norman: Thank you for your answer.

4th Reading

President Peters recused himself. Councilman Eades will preside over the next reading.

RESOLUTION 159-24 Sponsored by: Greg Eades A RESOLUTION adopting the recommendations of the Planning Commission**.** Johnson's Creek Subdivision, Parcel #31-03399.001.

Public Hearing scheduled for September 19, 2024 during the regular Council meeting

Councilman Eades requested that the clerk have an electronic copy of the map up on the wall for everyone to see at the next meeting

Leave for 5th Reading

New Business

President Peters took back over

RESOLUTION 167-24 Sponsored by: Shannon Treynor A RESOLUTION increasing appropriations. The Tax Department needs to replace their filing cabinets.

Councilwomen Treynor says file cabinets that are requested are fireproof and extra security measures.

Councilman Eades has not heard any comment or concern from the community on this issue

Motion to suspend the 3-reading rule by Councilman Hays, 2nd Councilman Norman. The motion carried by the following vote:

Absent:	**0-**	
Affirmative:	**6-**	**Hays, Hitt, Norman, Stahl, Treynor, Eades**
Against:	**1-**	**McDaniels**

Motion to adopt RESOLUTION by Councilman Hays, 2nd Councilman Norman . The motion carried by the following vote:

Absent:	**0-**	
Affirmative:	**7-**	**Hitt, McDaniels, Norman, Stahl, Treynor, Eades, Hays**
Against:	**0-**	

RESOLUTION 168-24 Sponsored by: Shannon Treynor A RESOLUTION increasing appropriations. The City has been reimbursed by the insurance company for repairs to a police cruiser.

Councilwomen Treynor said the city paid the cost of repair; insurance reimbursed.

Motion to suspend the 3-reading rule by Councilman Hays, 2nd Councilman Stahl. The motion carried by the following vote:

Absent: 0-
Affirmative: 7- McDaniels, Norman, Stahl, Treynor, Eades, Hays, Hitt
Against: 0-

Motion to adopt RESOLUTION by Councilman Hays, 2nd Councilman Stahl. The motion carried by the following vote:

Absent: 0-
Affirmative: 7- Norman, Stahl, Treynor, Eades, Hays, Hitt, McDaniels
Against: 0-

RESOLUTION 170-24 Sponsored by: Andrew Hitt A RESOLUTION increasing appropriations. The City Administration would like to purchase the software program Civic Plus.

Councilman Hitt said Mr. McKenzie presented information about this at the last meeting to streamline his department and help other city features as well. I believe next deadline is September 9th which would cause us to increase another 3k after that date.

Councilman Eades: I have a couple of thoughts. The resolution states $13,000, no matter what. This is essentially a convenience fee. They have thousands of customers, and holding us hostage over this time period really upsets me. I think this is a bit of a "gateway drug," so to speak. I'm not sure if the city has considered the other parts of their system. I was on their website, which led me to call them. They offer services like municipal websites, recreation management, mass notifications, social media archiving—which can help with public records requests. For instance, if someone calls and says their neighbor is doing something wrong, how does Mr. Castle track that? With this system, you can pull up the history and see if it's a recurring issue, all in one place. It could be a useful tool. It also offers community engagement consulting, tracking Freedom of Information requests, and even manages licenses and permits. I spoke with a contractor today who mentioned the permitting system is currently about a month behind. They don't have time to wait. This system could help speed up that process. Additionally, they have an agenda and meeting management system designed for clerks by clerks. So, my question after all of this is: if we are going to look into this, have we done any research to see if other departments could benefit from this? Maybe we should look into more modules to see if they are useful. I hope I can have a conversation with someone to inquire further. We should do more research before rushing into

this. Given that rentals are slowing down this time of year, maybe it's not urgent to act now without proper research. From the presentation, a lot of the focus was on renting facilities. I'm in favor of this for the public's convenience, but it could also reduce the workload for staff. I'm not sure it's overwhelming, but overall, it seems like a convenience worth considering.

Councilwoman Treynor: You might not have been at the finance meeting where we got more Q&A on this. I seem to recall a specific question about additional modules, and if those would increase the maintenance package cost. I didn't think there would be an additional fee once the package is installed. Yes, we would pay for the module, but the yearly maintenance would stay the same.

Mr. Castle: I'm not sure of the exact answer, but logically, I would think it might increase somewhat. Once you get the system set up, you just add modules. They were willing to give a discount before the busy season. Second thing, thank you Greg for going out and looking at software. We don't have our own building or zoning department; that's handled through West Jeff. They recently transitioned to new permit, inspection, and complaint software. It's only been about three months, so that might explain some of the delays. Going forward, they will add code violations and complaints as well. They wouldn't want to manage two separate portals for the permitting process.

Councilman Eades: There are other features that could be useful.

Mr. Castle: The key thing is we want to implement something that benefits the public. With this system, people can put in a request to rent a facility, and we can immediately see if it's available. They make the payment, and it's all automated. Another thing is sports registration. Once you get a kid signed up, this system maintains their information, so when they sign up for another sport, it's seamless. We're trying to make things easier for the public and our departments.

Another question that I have, the kids, they are in multiple programs. They don't have to fill out multiple sets of paperwork. It's a definitely plus feature

Motion to suspend the 3-reading rule by Councilman Norman, 2nd Councilman Stahl. The motion failed by the following vote:

Absent:	**0-**	
Affirmative:	**5-**	Stahl, Treynor, Hays, Hitt, Norman
Against:	**2-**	Eades, McDaniels

Leave for 3rd Reading

New Business

ORDINANCE 171-24 Sponsored by Andrew Hitt An ORDINANCE approving the editing and inclusion of certain ORDINANCES as parts of the various component codes of the Codified ORDINANCES; providing for the adoption and publication of new matter in the updated and revised codified ORDINANCES; repealing

ORDINANCES in conflict therewith; and declaring an Emergency.

Councilman Hitt: Based on this packet, which covers the past two years, they plan to update both the website and the physical book. This update will be crucial for keeping ordinances current and accessible. Builders often rely on these ordinances, but if outdated regulations are posted, they end up submitting plans that don't match what the council has approved. It's essential to keep the website up to date to avoid confusion and ensure compliance.

President Peters: I ask everyone to review and go through the packet.

Councilman Hitt: Law Director Hitt will also review it if needed.

President Peters: There are likely updates related to BPU, which will change next year.

Councilman Hitt: That's another reason to update annually because the BPU information is outdated.

Councilwoman Treynor: I checked the website, which claims that local legislation is up-to-date as of December 21, 2023. However, this packet includes 2007 supplements that haven't been added. As someone who has researched ordinances, it's frustrating not to rely on the website and having to call administration to verify information.

Mr. Castle: I'm not sure how those outdated supplements were published. They're supposed to wait for council approval before being published.

Councilman Eades: Did we do this update last year?

President Peters: We did a similar update a couple of years ago. When you see something during your review, send Law Director Hitt an email.

ORDINANCE 172-24 Sponsored by: Michael Norman An ORDINANCE amending section 1062 of the Codified Ordinances

Councilman Norman: We're currently modifying the city parks rules. Some amendments are still pending, so I don't recommend voting on this yet. Once the amendments are approved, we'll update all signage. There are some provisions, like the one about playing radios in the park, that seem excessive to me. I suggest you review the list and send any suggestions to the park committee. They meet on the first Tuesday of each month.

Mr. Castle: The park committee meeting was canceled two days ago for this month. Please reach out to Mr. McKenzie with any concerns.

Leave for 3rd Reading

RESOLUTION 173-24 Sponsored by: Brent McDaniels A RESOLUTION increasing

Appropriations.

Councilman McDaniels: Stated that this funding is needed to fix the roads.

Councilman Eades: Asked for clarification on what this will do.

Mr. Castle: Explained that this is for pothole repairs and stormwater drains. It won't cover entire streets but will address specific issues we're currently paying others to fix.

Councilman Eades: Inquired about the current machine.

Mr. Castle: The machine is over 20 years old and sometimes doesn't even work.

Councilwoman Treynor: Asked if the $900,000 given earlier this month has already been spent.

Councilman Norman: Confirmed that the funds have been spent. He recently requested an update and a list of streets that passed or failed inspections, and which ones will be repaired.

Mr. Castle: Noted that the repairs have been contracted but not yet completed. We need to schedule repairs before they come in. We're prioritizing the worst roads first. Over 40 roads have failed inspections.

Motion to suspend the 3-reading rule by Councilman Hays, 2nd Councilman Stahl. The motion failed by the following vote:

Absent:	**0-**	
Affirmative:	**5-**	Eades, Hays, Hitt, McDaniels, Stahl
Against:	**2-**	Treynor**,** Norman

Leave for 3rd Reading

RESOLUTION 174-24 Sponsored by: Brent McDaniels A RESOLUTION authorizing the Safety Service Director to enter into contract.

Councilman McDaniels: This is for Mr. Castle to get contract to purchase durapatcher

Leave for 3rd Reading

Round Table

Councilman Norman shared that he attended a Mid-Ohio Sewer District meeting and was pleased with how well-organized it was, as Mr. Castle had previously mentioned. He attended the meeting primarily to get updates on a couple of 3rd Ward projects that were handed off to Mid-Ohio. He provided an update on the Olive Street project, noting that it was completed back in June, and that's why

residents haven't seen any digging. They used a sleeve to finish the work. Norman then shifted back to the comprehensive plan discussion, urging any citizens watching the meeting who want to be part of the process to contact the administration and make their voices heard. He mentioned that two residents had come forward with complaints about sidewalks, which wasn't on the list of concerns, and encouraged anyone interested in serving or contributing to reach out to the administration.

Councilman Stahl gave a special shout-out to his wife in celebration of their 49th wedding anniversary this week.

Councilwoman Treynor announced that planning has begun for London's Old-Fashioned Christmas. She encouraged anyone interested in participating to reach out to Eve, or anyone on the committee. The goal is to plan earlier this year so they can have a map, schedule, and flyer well in advance, ensuring that everything is well-attended.

Councilman Hitt reminded everyone that the next public service meeting is scheduled for the 10th of the month.

Councilman Hays thanked the city employees for their hard work and informed everyone that the next public safety meeting will be held September 10th

Councilman McDaniels expressed his gratitude to everyone for attending the meeting.

Councilman Eades shared that he was glad to see the comprehensive plan being discussed. While he had seen emails about it, there hasn't been much other information available. He mentioned that he made a post the previous night providing an overview, where he stressed the importance of community awareness and involvement in these discussions. He emphasized the need for transparency.

Mr. Castle added one final note, giving a big shout-out to the sanitation department. He explained that they had been working extra hard lately, as two trucks had broken down, and combined with the holiday, it required a lot of additional effort. He praised the street department, particularly Bill, for graciously lending an employee with a CDL to help out, which prevented them from falling a week behind. Rex acknowledged receiving calls about recycling and trash not being picked up and assured everyone that the department is making an effort to get everything caught up by tomorrow. He extended a heartfelt thanks to all the sanitation employees.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:40pm

Attestation: Minutes approved, filed in Auditor's Office, and posted on City of London website for public review.

London City Council

September 5, 2024

Matt Edgington, Council Clerk	Josh Peters, Council President
Date	Date