

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

LONDON CITY COUNCIL Meeting

Casto & Harris Inc. Form S-301 E1412692LD

Held _____

JANUARY 20 _____ 20 22 _____

**London City Council
20 S. Walnut Street, London, Ohio 43140**

January 20, 2022

Minutes

Council President, Henry Comer, called the regular meeting of the London City Council to order at 6:30pm. He led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance and observed a moment of silent reflection.

Council members present: Henry Comer, Rich Hays, Anthony Smith, Andrew Hitt, Josh Peters, John Stahl, Bryan Robinson and Greg Eades

The minutes of the January 6, 2022 meeting were approved as written

COMMUNICATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Comer asked for a voice vote to approve Mayor Closser's appointment to the following:

- Board of Public Utilities – Marcus Vest, term expiring 12/31/27

Third Ward Neighborhood Revitalization Grant – Whitaker Wright

- The City of London will be applying for a \$750,000 grant to improve the third ward community. The grant application is due in June, 2022.
- Meetings with community members have been taking place since November to gather ideas of potential projects. Several ideas have been presented to an engineer to learn of preliminary costs
- Several smaller community projects are being discussed. These projects are considered "sweat equity" and serve to help match the State of Ohio's investment in London
- The next community meeting will take place on March 5, 2022 at 10am at London City Hall

AUDIENCE CONCERNS

President Comer amended the Council rules to state that individuals wishing to address Council be given a minimum of two minutes for their address without regard to topic.

Marilyn Krivicich – 398 Bishop Drive, London, Ohio 43140

- Stated that she is appreciative of being allowed to speak at past meetings
- Even though people may disagree, having input and conversations may help people find common ground

Michael Norman – 188 S. Oak Street, London, Ohio 43140

- Stated that he supports ordinance 110-22 but would like to see an amendment to limit the amount of funds the Fire/EMS Department will receive from the income tax increase and suggested .25%
- Would like to have more meetings about the design of the community center
 - Mayor Closser stated that town hall meetings are planned to discuss the community center details

Steven A. Miller – 225 Jenkinson Avenue, London, Ohio 43140

- Asked what specific building will be removed. Mayor Closser replied that the old high school and gymnasium, the London Visual Arts Guild building, the old boiler building, the current Mac-A-Cheek South School and part of the bus garage will be removed and these plans have been discussed with each organization
- Asked for an explanation of the Fire/EMS Department financing for the past three years. Mayor Closser explained that the funds received from seceding from Madison County Emergency Medical District and the decrease in property taxes

President Comer interjected to state that he believes that the London Fire/EMS funding and the new Police Department and community center buildings should be proposed to the public in separate tax levies and that more time is needed before asking the citizens to vote on an income tax increase.

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Anita Likens – 157 E. First Street, London, Ohio 43140

- Spoke of civility and the importance of fighting for social injustice
- Stated that we are all at risk of laws that may threaten the weakest
- We are protected by the rule of law and we are the people in charge of our government

Andrea Dillion – 66 E. Fifth Street, London, Ohio 43140

- Stated that she feels the proposed income tax increase to fund a new Police Department and community center would be a great addition to London and London families, but believes the storm sewers and drainage throughout the city is a more pressing issue
- Questioned the Fire/EMS Department budget and future solvency
- Would like to see plans for a modern storm sewer system and an income tax increase to pay for the renovations

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Eades – Finance Committee

- Stated that he attended his first Finance Committee meeting and has a lot to learn about the City budgeting process

Councilman Peters– Finance Committee Chair

- Stated that the upcoming legislation was discussed at the Finance Committee meeting

Councilman Hays - Public Safety Committee Chair

- Stated that farmland within the city was discussed at the recent meeting and the topic will be revisited at the next meeting
- Stated that the Police Department and community center feasibility was discussed at length and appears on the current Council agenda
- The next Public Safety meeting will take place on February 8, 2022 at 5:00pm

Councilman Hitt – Public Safety Committee

- Read the London Police Division Report
 - Seth Duhl, London, was hired as an officer and started January 9th, 2022. He was a lateral transfer from Franklin County SO. We currently have one open position for an officer and are currently accepting applications for police officer through lateral transfers, (those with experience and current certification). Our current civil service list for an officer was exhausted and we will be working with the CSC on developing a new process
 - Vanessa Emler resigned her position as an officer to accept a position with Columbus PD
 - We held our annual “Shop w/a Cop” in December and were able to serve approximately 40 children, the most ever; thanks to generous donations at the fundraiser held last October
 - We are still awaiting parts and scheduling for upfitting of a new cruiser
 - Keith Akers was hired as a part-time dispatcher
 - We have recently had several CEW (tasers) develop issues with the display and are looking into repair or replacement
 - We met with the London Schools to develop and plan for a Safety Town event to be held early summer
 - Sgt. Cooper has begun his Certified Law Enforcement Executive training class that will encumber over 12 months
 - We have received a final plan for the facility needs assessment, along with the community center

Councilman Stahl – Public safety Committee

- Read the London Fire/EMS Department Report
 - Departmental EMS Training-Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support
 - Departmental Fire Training- Aerial Operations
 - New Hire orientation continued
 - Picked up, organized, distributed and completed toy drive, Awaiting totals
 - Participated in the Olde Fashioned Christmas parade
 - Completed pump testing
 - Several station tours
 - Instructed CPR for high school senior and junior class
 - Assisted with COVID shot clinic at health department

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Councilman Smith – Board of Public Utilities Representative

- The next Board of Public Utilities meeting will take place on January 27, 2022 at 6:30pm

CITY OFFICIAL REPORTS

Mayor Closser reported on current city events and issues (report attached)

OLD BUSINESS – none presented

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 102-22 – Sponsored by Josh Peters – A resolution authorizing the Auditor to transfer funds during 2022

Motion by Hays to place on first reading, seconded by Robinson

LEFT ON

Resolution 103-22 – Sponsored by Josh Peters – A resolution increasing appropriations

Motion by Hays to place on first reading, seconded by Stahl

Motion by Smith to suspend, seconded by Stahl

Roll call to suspend: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, no; Robinson, yes

Motion by Stahl to adopt, seconded by Smith

Roll to adopt: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, yes; Robinson, yes

PASSED

Resolution 104-22 – Sponsored by Greg Eades – A resolution increasing appropriations

Motion by Hays to place on first reading, seconded by Stahl

Motion by Smith to suspend, seconded by Robinson

Roll call to suspend: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, no; Robinson, yes

Motion by Stahl to adopt, seconded by Robinson

Roll to adopt: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, yes; Robinson, yes

PASSED

Resolution 105-22 – Sponsored by Greg Eades – A resolution increasing appropriations

Motion by Hays to place on first reading, seconded by Stahl

Motion by Smith to suspend, seconded by Stahl

Roll call to suspend: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, no; Robinson, yes

Motion by Stahl to adopt, seconded by Robinson

Roll to adopt: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, yes; Robinson, yes

PASSED

Resolution 106-22 – Sponsored by Josh Peters – A resolution increasing appropriations

Motion by Hays to place on first reading, seconded by Robinson

Motion by Robinson to suspend, seconded by Stahl

Roll call to suspend: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, no; Robinson, yes

Motion by Stahl to adopt, seconded by Robinson

Roll to adopt: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, yes; Robinson, yes

PASSED

Resolution 107-22 – Sponsored by Greg Eades – A resolution increasing appropriations

Motion by Hays to place on first reading, seconded by Robinson

Motion by Hays to suspend, seconded by Stahl

Roll call to suspend: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, yes; Robinson, yes

Motion by Stahl to adopt, seconded by Hays

Roll to adopt: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, yes; Robinson, yes

PASSED

President Comer interjected a point of order to state that when voting ends Councilors should wait for him to proceed.

Held

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Resolution 108-22 – Sponsored by Josh Peters – A resolution increasing appropriations

Motion by Hays to place on first reading, seconded by Robinson

Motion by Robinson to suspend, seconded by Hays

Roll call to suspend: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, yes; Robinson, yes

Motion by Hays to adopt, seconded by Robinson

Roll to adopt: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, yes; Robinson, yes

PASSED

Resolution 109-22 – Sponsored by Josh Peters – A resolution increasing appropriations

Motion by Hays to place on first reading, seconded by Robinson

Motion to amend the legislation to include the terms traffic signal by Peters, seconded by Hays

Roll call to amend: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, yes; Robinson, yes

Motion by Smith to suspend, seconded by Stahl

Roll call to suspend: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, no; Robinson, yes

Motion by Hays to adopt, seconded by Robinson

Roll to adopt: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, yes; Robinson, yes

PASSED

Ordinance 110-22 – Sponsored by Rich Hays – An ordinance to increase the municipal income tax by one half of one percent (0.50%) per annum for a continuing period of time for the purpose of providing funds to pay costs of acquiring, constructing, furnishing, equipping, improving, maintaining and repairing municipal recreational facilities, municipal fire department facilities, and municipal police department facilities owned by the city of London, to pay general operating expenses related to municipal recreational facilities, of the fire department, and of the police department, and to pay any expenses and debt service charges for debt incurred in connection therewith, authorizing the question of such increase to be placed on the ballot at the election to be held on May 3, 2022 and declaring an emergency

Motion by Hays to place on first reading, seconded by Stahl

- Councilman Hays introduced the legislation by explaining the needs of the city and the process by which it will be proposed to the voters. He then asked Mayor Closser and/or Safety Service Director Castle if they had additional comments. Mayor Closser stated that Chief Nicol would like to address Council.
- President Comer admonished the Mayor for asking Police Chief Glenn Nicol to address Council stating that it is the Council President who introduces guest speakers. He added that the Mayor is allowed to be at this meeting but some cities do not allow their Mayors to attend Council proceedings. He then recognized Chief Nicol and allowed him to speak.
- Chief Nicol presented an overview of why the feasibility was created and explained the necessity of the City overseeing our EMS services. He explained the needs of the Police Department and how the community would benefit from a community center.
- President Comer stated that Council should not rush the decision to propose a tax increase on the May election ballot and his belief of putting all issues on one levy was similar to what big governments call adding “pork belly.”
- Councilman Eades stated that no funding discussion regarding this proposal took place prior to the January 10, 2022 Finance Committee meeting. He said that he spoke with a commercial banker to learn about financing a similar loan. Safety Service Director, Rex Castle, explained that the City is not working with a commercial bank for the loan and instead pursuing an income tax bond through a bond agency at a lesser interest rate.
- Councilman Smith stated that past Councilors never stated the Fire/EMS Department would operate without a levy and believes that including all aspects of the proposal on one levy is a good idea. He asked the public to make sure they are understanding the correct budgetary figures and not just listening to rumors. He said that he has personally dealt with flooding and understands that this is an important issue as well.
- Councilman Peters asked why the proposal needs to be on the May election ballot. Mayor Closser explained that if the voters have a chance to decide in May and the levy fails, it will give the City time to restructure the proposal and try to pass it again at the November election.
- Chief Nicol stated that it was not the intention to rush the proposal but the timeline is shorter than expected because of a misunderstanding with a Board of Elections deadline. He also said

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that in his experience, including all proposals on one levy is preferred and when more than one is offered at the same time, they all could potentially fail.

Motion to amend the legislation to state that the Fire/EMS Department will receive tax revenues, not to exceed .25% of the .5% proposed increase by Smith, seconded by Stahl

Roll call to amend: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, no; Robinson, yes

Motion by Hays to suspend, seconded by Robinson

Roll call to suspend: Peters, no; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, no; Robinson, yes

Councilman Eades questioned the majority vote for suspension. Mayor Closser explained that a supermajority, six affirmative votes, is needed to suspend legislation and since just five members voted to suspend the legislation, it will remain on the agenda.

THE LEGISLATION WAS LEFT ON FOR A SECOND READING

Resolution 111-22 – Sponsored by Rich Hays - A resolution to place the issue of increasing the municipal income tax by one half of one percent (0.50%) per annum for a continuing period of time as provided in ordinance no. 110-22, on the ballot at the election to be held on May 3, 2022 and directing the Board of Elections of Madison County, Ohio to conduct such election, and declaring an emergency

Motion by Hays to place on first reading, seconded by Robinson

LEFT ON

Councilman Smith moved to reopen and reevaluate the Council rules so that Councilors may have more time to study the changes that were recently made. President Comer stated that the rules are made at the privilege of the Council President and that they are not voted on by the Council body and therefore denied the Councilman Smith's motion. Councilman Smith stated that the rules were voted on at the previous meeting. President Comer replied that there was no vote on the rules at the previous meeting and therefore, he will not allow a vote to reopen and reevaluate them.

ROUND TABLE

Councilman Smith

- Thanked the audience for their attendance
- Encouraged everyone to check out the Madison County Fairgrounds calendar as they have many events coming up
- Promoted the upcoming free Revive Baptist Church's Sportsman Banquet scheduled for Saturday, February 12, 2022 at the fairgrounds

Councilman Stahl

- Thanked those in the audience for their attendance

Councilman Hitt

- Thanked those in the audience for their attendance and for voicing their opinions
- The next Safety Committee meeting will take place on February 8, 2022 at 5:00pm

Councilman Hays

- Thanked those in the audience for their attendance and for voicing their opinions
- Thanked all City employees for their hard work and especially the Street Department for clearing the roads after the recent snowfall
- Ask God's blessing on London, Ohio

Councilman Robinson

- Thanked those in the audience for their attendance and for voicing their opinions
- Stated that he wants London to grow as a community and that housing developers evaluate the amenities that communities offer
- Stated that much work is being done to bring a face to our town and to clean up some of the eyesores
- The next Public Service Committee meeting will take place on February 2, 2022 at 1:00pm

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Councilman Peters

- Read Rule 'S' under the Procedure portion of the Council rules: "These rules or any part herein may be temporarily suspended in any meeting of Council by a three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote of all members. This would require six (6) affirmative votes". President Comer asked if Councilman Peters was referring to the correct copy of the rules.
 - Councilman Smith stated that the only copy he received was emailed from the Clerk and included the clause that Councilman Peters read. He reiterated that he was within his right earlier in the meeting to move to temporarily suspend the Council rules
 - Councilman Eades suggested that the rules be revisited and amended at a future meeting
 - President Comer stated he will go back over the rules and choose which ones he would like to have and does not understand the controversy.
 - Councilman Hitt stated that a Point of Order is not debatable.
 - Councilman Smith, again, asked for his motion to be recognized and President Comer denied the request
- Stated that the proposed levy is needed and requested to schedule two special Council meetings
- Thanked those in the audience for their attendance

Councilman Eades

- Thanked those in the audience for their attendance
- Stated that more time is need to study the proposed tax increase
- Stated that the pride of London starts at home and urged all to look around them and help clean their community

Council President Comer

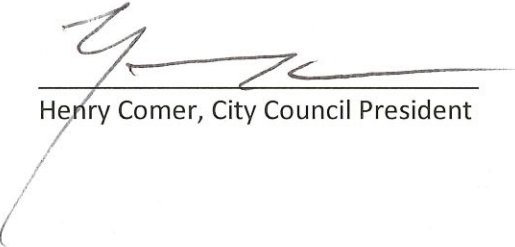
- Agreed that the City needs a new Police Department building and community center but is disagreeing with the timeline of bringing it to the public
- Stated that he will revisit the rules and make any necessary changes

Councilman Peters moved to convene special Council meetings on January 26 and February 1, 2022 at 6:30pm at City Hall to discuss ordinance 110-22 and resolution 111-22. Councilman Smith seconded the motion and Councilman Robinson concurred and the meeting dates and times were confirmed. President Comer asked for a roll call and the results were as follows: Peters, yes; Hays, yes; Hitt, yes; Stahl, yes; Smith, yes; Eades, no; Robinson, yes

Motion by Hays to adjourn at 9:07pm



Amy Rees, Clerk



Henry Comer, City Council President