London City Council

20 S. Walnut Street, London, Ohio 43140

November 21, 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, Councilman Stahl, Councilman Norman, Councilwoman Treynor*

Minutes – Approval of November 7, 2024 minutes, approved by unanimous vote

Public Hearing

Communications/Announcements – none

Audience Concerns

Michael C. Norman, 188 S. Oak Street stated he reviewed the agenda, and was glad to see that our city council is requesting appropriations for funds to maintain our basketball court and our skate park. Wonderful news as far as recreational ability for the citizens. Secondly, He was requesting several documents for cross-referencing budgets, population sizes, and municipalities comparable to us in size. The leading factor he came to was deciding whether or not the municipalities that were comparable in size to us were charter cities versus statutory municipalities. He wanted to gauge the opinion of the city council on whether London should stay a statutory municipality or try to adopt a charter form of government.

Councilman Eades responded that a charter form of government lets us create our own rules. We wouldn't have to follow the Ohio Revised Code to the letter as we do now. We could change some things, have more or fewer council members, and different terms. We could have a city manager form of government instead of a strong mayor and a Safety Service Director. However, it's quite a process. You need a group that wants to push that forward.

Michael C. Norman responded that I'm a little familiar with that process. I have some experience with the concept of a strong mayor. My original question was whether any city council members would begin to move forward with the process of making us a charter city. Is that in London's interest?

Councilman McDaniels stated that After looking at the budget, it might be a necessity more than an interest.

Councilman Norman stated that he thinks it's a good question. We just saw Plain City go through this within the last two years. It's an option we might look at, but we need to get through the Comprehensive Plan first. It's a big deal, and we should focus on that before changing bigger things like a charter.

Councilwoman Treynor stated that she seconded that. She can see us moving towards a charter form of government in the future, especially with anticipated growth. However, asking this council to undertake the task of charter writing and rulemaking would be a big challenge. Right now, we have other priorities.

Michael C. Norman stated that is wonderful news. He agreed that the anticipated growth of London, given our proximity to Central Ohio, makes this a real possibility for the future. It's good to know there may be discussions and plans for this.

Committee Reports — *(Department reports are attached to committee meeting minutes.)*

Councilman Eades: Reported on the budget committee meeting held on November 18. The auditor's report showed more revenue than expenses. The tax department report indicated a 6.4% increase in income taxes and a 6.3% increase in the fire fund. He mentioned that everyone should receive documents for review before the next meeting, which includes new legislation and the 2025 budget.

Councilman McDaniels: Attended the public service and public safety meeting, where the fire report and parks and recreation report were given.

Councilman Hays: Reported on the safety service committee meeting held on November 12. They discussed central dispatching and the need for two new pedestrian stop lights at Park/Main and Fifth/Main. The next meeting is scheduled for December 10 at 6pm.

Councilman Hitt: Attended the public finance meeting, with the next meeting scheduled for December 16 at 5:30pm. He also attended the public service meeting, where they discussed several issues, including the installation of a digital sign, state rerouting of major routes, and the acquisition of a new dump truck. He mentioned that the salt dome is not worth repairing, but a new salt building is completed. The street department is assisting the sanitation department with trash pickup.

Councilwoman Treynor: Attended the finance meeting, where they discussed new housing development plans and modifications to proposed contracts. They expect to finalize language and proposals for developers by the December 5th meeting.

Councilman Stahl: Gave the police report.

Councilman Norman: Gave the street department report, mentioning that the Center Street construction, which was supposed to start in October, has been delayed. Once it starts, it will be closed for more than 60 days, followed by the closure of the other side of Center Street.

City Official Reports

Mayor Closser report attached

Motion to enter into executive session by Councilman Norman, 2nd Councilman Stahl. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Motion to exit executive session by Councilman Eades, 2nd Councilman Norman. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Old Business

3rd Reading

ORDINANCE 186-24 Sponsor: John Stahl An ORDINANCE declaring the necessity for planting, maintaining, trimming, and removing shade trees in and along the streets of the City of London, estimating the cost thereof and providing for the levy of special assessment

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

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

2nd Reading

RESOLUTION 192-24 Sponsored by Andrew Hitt A RESOLUTION authorizing the Auditor to increase appropriations and transfer funds. The basketball courts and skate park need to be milled and filled.

Councilman Hitt stated this is for Walnut Street and park street basketball courts and skate park that need milled and filled

Councilman Eades stated that the Parks/Recreation Department, Street Department, and Public Service Committee have all recommended this work be done.

ORDINANCE 193-24 Sponsored by Greg Eades An ORDINANCE for strengths on job descriptions.

Councilman Eades explained that this allows for a Lieutenant on all shifts for both stations.

Councilman Norman: Asked a question about the number of supervisors and employees.

Mayor: Responded that the number of full-time employees (FTE) remains at 18, with the number of supervisors increasing from 3 to 6. There will not be more employees, just a change in the supervisory structure.

ORDINANCE 194-24 Sponsored by Greg Eades An ORDINANCE amending ORDINANCE 230-23 to reflect a range of salaries of Department Heads and Non-union personnel.

Councilman Eades states this is in response to recent union negotiations by stating that department heads will be allowed to receive up to a 6 then 4 and 4% increase, ensuring they can earn more than their employees. He emphasized that raises will not be automatic and may be based on performance or other criteria. Additionally, this policy does not apply to elected officials, and there will be no changes to part-time rates.

RESOLUTION 195-24 Sponsored by Shannon Treynor A RESOLUTION authorizing the Safety Service Director to enter into a collective bargaining agreements between the City of London and the London Firefighters Local 3509 IAF.

Councilwoman Treynor stated that this has been approved by the union and is coming to the council for their part. It needs to be in effect before the end of the year.

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION 196-24 Sponsored by Shannon Treynor A RESOLUTION adopting the recommendations of the Planning Commission. London Landing at Brooksedge Phase IV

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

Leave for a 3rd Reading

RESOLUTION 197-24 Sponsored by Greg Eades A RESOLUTION authorizing the Mayor to enter into a collection agreement with the Ohio Attorney General. The City has delinquent debts that they are unable to collect

Councilman Eades stated we have delinquent taxpayers that we cannot collect easily. Takes the burden off the tax department and law director. The OAG can file against their other returns, and we will get our money. We pay 10% to OAG.

Leave for a 3rd Reading

New Business

ORDINANCE 198-24 Sponsored by: Greg Eades 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, 2025

Councilman Eades: So this will be the 2025 proposed budget. Each member should have received a detailed report from the city auditor. If you haven't, please reach out to her. He encourages all members to look over this and contact the auditor with any additional questions you have about specific budget items. What we see on this ordinance is just the total, so if you want to look more at specific items, you can do that. I do want to point out two items within the proposed budget, and it's on the detailed sheet. There's $135,000 to pay for new pickleball courts and $100,000 to repair an existing salt barn at the street department. Both of these items are essentially capital improvements, and if we approve it in this form, we're basically pre-approving those projects. However, if we remove those items, then they'll come to us to be approved within the capital budget. Each item can be debated and amended, and another action could take place at that time. So this is a bit of a change.

Councilman McDaniels: Did we vote this down?

Councilman Eades: The council did vote down pickleball court in the way it was presented at that time. So I believe, while the councilman can speak to why he would like to see this in the budget, we'll leave that up to him in just a minute. But this is kind of a change, and in my mind, if we start pre-planning things, and we know well in advance what's going to happen, and you add it to the budget, you do take out that possibility. Now, it does bring the question that was brought to me by someone else, and we'll see if Mr. Castle can answer this. Since these items are going to be over the $75,000 limit, will these have to be bid out? Will this have to come back? And Mr. Norman raised his hand. Do you want to take that, or do you want to address that?

Councilman Norman: I asked that question to our auditor, who then, in turn, got a hold of our law director, and yes, both of these will still come through because

they're over $75,000. We're just putting the money in that account ahead of time so that it's there. They're just going to come to us for permission to enter into the contract. So you are correct when you say, if we approve this budget, we're basically approving that we want the pickleball court put in, and we want that new building. He was the one who recommended that they do it this way, actually, because he feels that it frees up their hands to start looking now for prices and locations. He thinks the longer time they know they have $135,000 to work with; it gives the more bargaining power they have during the process of getting those bids and such. Whereas, if we wait, they have to come and we have to approve the money, and then we have to go through that. Then they have to come back to us and say, "Hey, can we enter into a bid with such and such?" It's just making the process longer. I think this is a way that makes it a little bit more efficient. They're still going to have to come back to us and ask for permission to go into contract. So it's not like we're just willy-nilly throwing it out there and saying, "Go crazy." They're still going to come back.

Councilman McDaniels: Well, we just voted this down this past spring. Wasn't it in June? And now we're going to put it in a budget for next year? It doesn't make any sense.

Mr. Castle: Whenever that was voted down, there was a location tied to it, so that was a little different than just asking to put in pickleball courts.

Councilman McDaniels: Well, for some it was the location. For others, it was more than the location.

Councilman Eades: And I believe if this council wants to do that, we can amend the budget.

Councilman McDaniels: Take the numbers out. I'd like to see a lot of numbers taken out. I'd like to see these departments see what they can do without, instead of keep telling us what they want more of.

Councilman Eades: That's a fair comment.

Councilman McDaniels: I believe that's what we're here for, right? To watch out for the taxpayers. Instead of coming at us wanting more and more, why doesn't the administration show us what they can do without in some of these departments?

Mayor: Are we talking about pickleball courts? Because that is the community.

Councilman McDaniels: That's a want. Well, it's not a need. I'll tell you what we need. We need sidewalks fixed all over this town, and I don't see anything in the budget for that.

Mayor: The community is who is asking for pickleball courts. If you're speaking about something else, we can discuss and explain it or get your thoughts on it.

Leave for a 2nd Reading

ORDINANCE 199-24 Sponsored by: Shannon Treynor An ORDINANCE providing for the issuance of not to exceed $4,500,000 of bonds by the City of London, Ohio, for the purpose of financing the costs of the acquisition, construction, installations, furnishing, and equipping of a new police station, and all necessary appurtenances thereto, and matters related thereto, and declaring an emergency

Councilwoman Treynor explained that the funding being discussed is not new money but replacement funding. Initially, the plan was to seek a USDA loan due to its favorable interest rate. However, with potential changes in the federal executive branch, there is uncertainty about the USDA's ability to issue the loan. This uncertainty includes the timing and amount of funding, which affects the ability to pay contractors and professionals already involved in the project. If the new ordinance is passed, it would replace the previous one that allowed the city to seek financing for the police department.

Mr. Castle mentioned that the bond council advised passing the ordinance quickly to start the process before the holidays. If passed, bonds could be put out to bid in late January, with funds available by February. This would allow the city to start bidding for contractors and materials sooner than waiting for USDA funding, which might not be available until August of the following year.

Councilwoman Treynor noted the difference in interest rates: USDA's rate was quoted at 3.84%, potentially rising to 3.95%, while alternative financing might be around 4.65%. She emphasized the need to explore new funding avenues to avoid delays and increased costs.

Councilman McDaniels expressed concern about changing plans mid-way Councilman Norman worried about the USDA not guaranteeing the full $4.5 million needed. He pointed out that the USDA's requirement for matching funds creates a catch-22 situation.

Mr. Castle read an email from the USDA indicating potential delays in federal budget processes, suggesting a commercial loan might be faster.

Councilman McDaniels stated that waiting a few more months wouldn't hurt

Mr. Castle highlighted the rising costs of materials over time.

Councilman Norman reiterated the uncertainty of receiving the full amount from the USDA.

Councilman Eades provided a comparison of annual debt service payments: $248,000 for bonds versus $227,000 for the USDA loan, noting a $20,000 annual difference. He also mentioned the possibility of refinancing bonds if interest rates drop through bonds.

Councilman Hitt added that delay costs were not included in the figures, which could make the costs similar or higher.

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION 200-24 Sponsored by: Shannon Treynor A RESOLUTION authorizing the Safety-Service Director to enter into collective bargaining agreement between the City of London and the Ohio Patrolmen's benevolent association

Councilwoman Treynor stated that this was the subject of the executive session. The contract has been ratified by the union.

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

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

Leave for a 2nd Reading

RESOLUTION 201-24 Sponsored by: Shannon Treynor A RESOLUTION declaring the official intent and reasonable expectation of the City of London on behalf of the State of Ohio (the borrower) to reimburse it's storm water utility fund 690 for the CK01AA/CK02AA, third ward storm sewer improvements with the proceeds of tax exempt debt of the State of Ohio

Councilwoman Treynor stated that this resolution is for an intent for the city to be reimbursed for invoices already paid for the Third World Stormwater Project. This resolution is a requirement under Ohio law.

Councilman Norman asked if they are reimbursing and, not us to reimburse them.

Councilwoman Treynor reiterated that this is a letter of intent to reimburse the fund for project draws a relatively new legislative requirement.

Mr. Castle added that the requirement goes into effect on the second draw. The first draw was reimbursed, but the second set of bills was not paid due to the new requirement for a council resolution. This procedural step is necessary before any further reimbursement can occur. He expressed concern about the increasing

amount of money being paid out without reimbursement, which could halt the project if appropriated funds run out.

Councilwoman Treynor noted that the legislative requirement accounts for the complex language in the resolution.

Mr. Castle emphasized the urgency of passing the resolution to avoid financial strain on the project.

Leave for a 2nd Reading

RESOLUTION 202-24 Sponsored by: Greg Eades A RESOLUTION increasing appropriations. The fire department does not have enough budgeted in their salary line for the rest of the year.

Councilman Eades stated they have money in their fund but not appropriated for salaries. They are not asking for an increase from the general fund. Just making this money available for salaries for the rest of the year. They may run out before the last pay, so we need to do this now.

Councilman Norman asked where this money is coming from because it is not listed.

Mr. Castle said this is his own fund, 228 is the fund its coming from.

Councilman Eades reiterated that this is just a reappropriation of his own fund

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION 203-24 Sponsored: by Greg Eades A RESOLUTION increasing appropriations. The fire department does not have enough budgeted in their pension line for the rest of the year.

Councilman Eades said this is same situation to pay for their pension.

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION 204-24 Sponsored by: Michael Norman A RESOLUTION increasing appropriations. The city would like to continue to utilize the part time Parks and Recreation Employee.

Councilman Norman: Proposed extending the employment of a Parks and Recreation security personnel beyond the original end date, as her pay would have ended last Saturday. Due to her success, they decided to extend her employment further into the season.

Councilman Eades: Expressed concern about extending the employment without a report on her activities. Initially, she was to be employed while parks were open, but with bathrooms now closed, he questioned the need for her continued presence.

Councilman Norman: Agreed with the concerns but felt that year-round park security is necessary. He argued that fewer people in the park could lead to more vandalism, thus supporting the extension.

Mayor: Clarified that the employee's duties extend beyond security. She picks up trash, helps with projects, and assists with plowing multipurpose paths and walking areas. Her role includes changing trash cans and taking out trash.

Councilman Hitt: Noted positive feedback from the community regarding the parks.

Mayor: Added that calls about park issues have decreased, and there has been positive feedback from the community. He mentioned receiving compliments from mothers and elderly people about the park's cleanliness and beauty.

Councilwoman Treynor stated that the employee has been diligent, even on difficult days, and her presence has been noticed and appreciated.

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION 205-24 Sponsored by: Andrew Hitt A RESOLUTION increasing appropriations. Health providers need to be paid.

Mr. Castle: Explained the city's partially self-funded insurance plan with a third-party administrator (TPA) managing funds from employees and the city to pay medical bills. The state requires visibility of these transactions in the city's financials, leading to the creation of a new fund to mirror deposits and withdrawals, approximately $2.2 million each. Clarified that this fund does not affect the city's funds and is solely for auditing purposes. Mentioned that appropriations are needed before entering checks for the year.

Councilman Hitt: Stated that the fund is a mechanism for the state to audit those funds.

Councilwoman Treynor: Added that the resolution accounts for checks already written by the TPA and requires an initial appropriation of $2.2 million to match the end-of-year balance. Noted that the fund was created and needs to account for 2024 expenditures. Clarified that the TPA's bank account must be converted into a city-administered fund for auditing purposes. Acknowledged the difficulty in understanding that $2.2 million is actually zero on paper.

Mr. Castle: Reiterated that the fund will function the same way, with the TPA managing expenditures, and the fund reflecting deposits and withdrawals for auditing purposes.

Councilman Eades: stated that the auditor was not present to explain the audit. Highlighted confusion about the fund's setup and its impact on financial records. Confirmed that the fund will show a zero balance on paper, reflecting the money already spent.

Councilwoman Treynor: Reiterated the difficulty in understanding that $2.2 million is actually zero on paper.

Councilman Norman: Asked if the fund consolidates various lines into one for better tracking.

Mr. Castle: Kind of, sort of, kind of, right, it's a separate account. Expenses were made, and that money was paid to our third-party administrator, put in a fund for them to write checks on. So now she has to create a city fund to basically say how that's been.

Councilwoman Treynor: If we say that the third-party administrator had a fund, that makes it sound like it was city money. They had their bank account that they were taking the city deposits and employee deposits and writing checks out of that. That

bank account has to be converted into a city-administered fund. Presumably, the third-party administrator will have access to make expenditures out of that fund so they continue in their responsibilities.

Mr. Castle: My assumption that it's still going to function the same way is still going to go into their bank account. This fund is just going to reflect how deposits go in and how they'll be for auditing purposes. Just for auditing purposes.

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, Treynor, Stahl**
Against:	**2-**	**McDaniels, Norman**

Councilman Norman would like more clarification on this resolution from the Auditor on how this works

Leave for a 2nd Reading

Round Table

Councilman Norman: Thanked everyone for attending and highlighted the promotion of the Old-Fashioned Christmas event on Facebook. He praised the downtown Christmas lights and recognized two officers who rescued a 5-year-old from the water. He emphasized the importance of acknowledging officers' commendable actions and looked forward to the next meeting.

Councilman Stahl: Mentioned the new shops and renovations downtown, wished good luck to the Raiders, and extended Thanksgiving wishes to everyone.

Councilwoman Treynor: Reminded everyone about the Old Fashioned Christmas event on December 1 and encouraged volunteering. She mentioned additional lights and cleanup projects scheduled for the upcoming Saturday.

Councilman Hitt: Wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and good luck to the football team. He mentioned his son and daughter-in-law's coffee truck at the Old Fashioned Christmas event.

Councilman Hays: Thanked everyone for attending and praised the police officers for their bravery. He expressed gratitude to city employees, especially sanitation workers, and wished everyone a blessed and safe Thanksgiving. He encouraged support for the football team, which is 13-0, at their game in Springfield.

Councilman McDaniels Thanked everyone for attending and mentioned the hope for budget amendments. He wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

Councilman Eades Thanked officers Dylan Fout and Denise Dye. He shared good news about pedestrian crossing actions and mentioned the historical society's

trolley for the Old Fashioned Christmas event. He reminded everyone about the finance committee meeting on December 16 and cheered for the football team.

Mayor: Mentioned attending 13 consecutive games and cheering home and away for the football team and updating the public on Facebook.

President Peters: Thanked volunteers for the downtown lights, which look amazing and could become a permanent fixture. And continued cheering and support for the Red Raiders

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:11pm

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

Matthew Edgington, Council Clerk	Joshua Peters, Council President
Date	Date