LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL
LANCASTER, OHIO
COUNCIL OF THE WHOLE MEETING
July 29, 2019

PRAYER

CALL TO ORDER

President Uhl called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m., in Council’s Chambers.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Uhl led Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The following members of Council were present:

Mrs. Bobbitt, Mrs. Downour; Mr. Groff, Mr. Hall, Mr. McDaniel, Mr. Schoonover, and Mrs. Tener, and Mr. Woodgeard.

President Uhl asked that the record reflect that eight of nine members are in attendance tonight.

Mrs. Downour made a motion to excuse Mr. Stoughton from tonight’s meeting, seconded by Mr. Woodgeard. The motion carried.

READING OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution Temporary 87-19* – Third Reading – Permanent Resolution 91-19
A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE NECESSITY OF AN ELECTION ON THE QUESTION OF APPROVING THE PASSAGE OF AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTIONS 183.012, 183.013 AND 183.02 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, OHIO, IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE CITY INCOME TAX RATE BY FORTY-FIVE HUNDREDTHS OF ONE PERCENT (0.45%) FROM THE CURRENT RATE OF ONE AND SEVENTY-FIVE HUNDREDTHS PERCENT (1.75%) TO A RATE OF TWO AND TWENTY HUNDREDTHS PERCENT (2.20%), BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2020, TO SPECIFY THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FROM SUCH TAX AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mrs. Downour made a motion to amend Resolution Temporary 87-19 by replacing it with Resolution Temporary 87-19*, as given to the Clerk in writing prior to the meeting, seconded by Mr. McDaniel.

Mrs. Downour explained that this change outlines some redistribution, which is laid out in the resolution.
President Uhl asked if there is any discussion on the motion to amend, with none, he requested the Clerk to call the roll. The motion to replace by amending carried 8-0.

Mrs. Downour made a motion to pass, engross, and enter upon the written record Temporary Resolution 87-19*, seconded by Mr. McDaniel.

Mrs. Downour stated there was special finance committee meeting last week, where additional details were presented by Mayor Scheffler. All members present received the additional information and those not in attendance, it is her hope that they also received the additional information. Mrs. Downour stated that maybe Mayor Scheffler would like to elaborate on the new information that he provided this evening and any other details before going around Council for additional discussion.

Mayor Scheffler stated that one of the things that he distributed this evening that had also been previously given to City Council members in the past is the comparable salaries. This has been brought up before and was an issue. These numbers before Council are from the 2019 Ohio Municipal League Salary Survey, which includes all of the cities that reported to the league. Some of the cities listed are some that the city of Lancaster used as comparable in the past. The City of Newark did not respond with the request for salary information for the Municipal League. The report before Council, the Mayor stated he structured the columns with the like kind of functions, such as Mayor, City Manager, Assistant City Manager and others such as Council, Law Director/Prosecutor, the finance area, Building/Zoning Officials; and Service-Safety Director and Public Works, so that comparable salaries can be seen as other cities the size of Lancaster around the State of Ohio. Mayor Scheffler stated he would answer any questions. In his opinions, the results are self-explanatory.

President Uhl asked if there was further discussion around the table this evening. President Uhl reminded everyone that this is their last chance.

Mr. Woodgeard stated with passing this tonight, the public will need to be brought up to date as to concerns about salaries and other things. Clarification is needed for the public how the City of Lancaster is comparing salaries. The City of Lancaster is lucky, at this point, that the Mayor has done a good job over the last couple of years with the public domain up to date and involved. There are individuals who question how the street levy funds are being spent. We need to be able to explain to the public what is going on, what we are doing, and why we need the additional funds and what will be done with it. This is not just to make the town beautiful, but rather make the town safer, City Hall has definite needs, if the City would add an additional fire department, this will help everyone in the community to bring down the response time and eliminate a lot of the reliance we have on neighboring fire departments. We need to do a good job informing the public, keeping them involved, and letting them know that we are working for them and that this is something that will help them in their lives.

President Uhl asked if there was further discussion on the motion to pass.

Mr. McDaniel stated the primary reason, we as City Council must address this issue is not because money has not been managed properly over the years, but rather we are providing less services than we did 10 years ago when departments had to lay off employees. The police department from 2015 to 2018 went from 60,000 calls for police services to 68,000 calls for police services. We are seeing the same issue in the fire department and doing this with the same staff as we had. The police department, since the late 1980’s has had stagnate staffing, while calls for police services have skyrocketed. Mr. McDaniel’s stated he is not just talking about the police department, but the administration has significantly reduced costs and looked for ways to save and provide the same service on a reduced budget and reduced staffing and has done that year after year. It is Mr. McDaniel’s belief that this is
happening is not the City's management of the money, but rather the states deductions the City has been forced to suffer as a result of the state balancing their budget on the backs of cities like Lancaster. The Mayor has provided a lot of useful information and shows the City has lost over two million dollars over the last several years. These funds use to come from sales tax and local government funding that was promised when our parents and grandparents voted for the state sales tax. Fifty or Sixty years ago, these funds were promised to the community, well that promise has been broken and now it is on the City to find what services we want to provide, how are we going to provide those services, and how those services will be funded, because the state has abandoned and the funds that the City use to get is gone, and will not be coming back. City of Lancaster citizens has seen a reduction in their income tax, and is great, but is has also reduced the City's ability for all the services they should be providing. So, when the questions comes up why the City didn't do this or didn't do that, and how we can't do this and how we can't do that, we do not have the money we had 10 years ago.

President Uhl acknowledged that there biggest reason we are in this mess is that the states revenue to the City has decreased. President Uhl asked if there was any other discussion on this issue.

Mr. Hall states while he does agree with Mr. McDaniel, those reductions occurred in 2011, and maybe what the City should do as they move forward it to put together a slightly more positive spin on things. Residents did get their taxes reduced, the City is having significant financial distress, but because of that reduction in our taxes, the citizens should look at this as an opportunity to reinvest in our City to essentially take control of a set of funds that once was more directed and more reversely controlled by state officials. The Governor essential pushed the responsibility down to the citizens and now it is time for us to step up to make sure meet our obligations to the City.

President Uhl asked if there was further discussion on the motion to pass.

Mr. Groff stated while he disagrees with some of the things said, he stated the part that he does agree with is that there is a need for money within the City, his disagreement is more of the means, but becomes irrelevant at this point. The relevant point at this point is the taxpayers deserve the right to vote on and all Council is voting tonight is to put it on the ballot.

President Uhl stated that that was correct, we are not voting to increase the taxes tonight, we are voting on whether or not to place this measure on the ballot to allow the citizens of Lancaster to decide whether or not the income tax will be increased. President Uhl thanked Mr. Groff for that clarification and asked if there was further discussion on the motion to pass.

Mrs. Downour stated that she agrees with Mr. Groff, in the sense that the citizens will have the voice.

President Uhl asked if there is any other discussion on the motion to pass, with none, he requested the Clerk to call the roll. The motion to pass carried 8-0.

Resolution Temporary 88-19* – Third Reading – WITHDRAWN – July 29, 2019
A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE NECESSITY OF AN ELECTION ON THE QUESTION OF APPROVING THE PASSAGE OF AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND
SECTIONS 183.012, 183.013 AND 183.02 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, OHIO, IN ORDER TO INCREASE AND REPLACE THE CITY INCOME TAX RATE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION TO A RATE OF TWENTY HUNDREDTHS OF ONE PERCENT (0.20%) CONTINUING, BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2023 FROM THE CURRENT RATE OF ONE AND ONE HALF TENTH OF ONE PERCENT (0.15%) TAX FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2018 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2022 ON EARNINGS AND INCOME TO A RATE OF TWENTY HUNDREDTHS PERCENT (0.20%) CONTINUING, BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2020, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mrs. Downour made a motion to withdraw Resolution Temporary 88-19*, seconded by Mr. McDaniel.

Mrs. Downour stated as mentioned before, a finance committee meeting was held last week, and after a vigorous discussion on this resolution and discussion with the park board president, they have elected not to pursue this at this time, so that is why she is requesting it be withdrawn at this time.

President Uhl asked if there is any discussion on the motion to withdraw, with none, he requested the Clerk to call the roll. The motion to table carried 8-0.

READING OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance Temporary 11-19* – Third Reading – July 29, 2019 – TABLED
AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTIONS 183.012, 183.013 AND 183.02 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, OHIO, IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE CITY INCOME TAX RATE BY FORTY-FIVE HUNDREDTHS OF ONE PERCENT (0.45%) FROM THE CURRENT RATE OF ONE AND SEVENTY-FIVE HUNDREDTHS PERCENT (1.75%) TO A RATE OF TWO AND TWENTY HUNDREDTHS PERCENT (2.20%), BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2020, AND TO SPECIFY THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FROM SUCH TAX

Mrs. Downour made a motion to replace Ordinance Temporary 11-19 by replacing it with Ordinance Temporary 11-19*, as given to the Clerk in writing prior to the meeting, seconded by Mr. McDaniel.

Mrs. Downour explained that this is the corresponding ordinance to the resolution 87-19*, which changes needed to be in the ordinance as well as the resolution.

President Uhl asked if there is any discussion on the motion to amend, with none, he requested the Clerk to call the roll. The motion to replace by amending carried 8-0.

Mrs. Downour made a motion to table Ordinance Temporary 11-19*, seconded by Mr. McDaniel.

Mrs. Downour explained that this ordinance needs to be tabled until the issue is voted upon.

President Uhl stated that this ordinance will sit on the table until the electors has the opportunity to vote upon and will be removed from the table to be voted upon at that time.

President Uhl asked if there is any discussion on the motion to table, with none, he requested the Clerk to call the roll. The motion to table carried 8-0.

Ordinance Temporary 12-19* – Third Reading – July 29, 2019 – WITHDRAWN
AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTIONS 183.012, 183.013 AND 183.02 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, OHIO, IN ORDER TO INCREASE REPEAL THE CURRENT RATE OF CITY INCOME TAX RATE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION ONE
AND ONE-HALF TENTH OF ONE PERCENT (0.15%) TAX FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2018 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2022 ON EARNINGS AND INCOME AND REPLACE WITH A RATE OF TO TWENTY HUNDREDTHS OF ONE PERCENT (0.20%) CONTINUING, BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2023, ON EARNINGS AND INCOME FOR PARKS AND RECREATION, AS MORE FULLY SET FORTH HEREIN, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mrs. Downour made a motion to withdraw Ordinance Temporary 12-19*, seconded by Mr. McDaniel.

Mrs. Downour explained that this is the corresponding ordinance to resolution 88-19, which has been withdrawn. Mrs. Downour would like to withdraw the ordinance as well.

President Uhl asked if there was further discussion on the motion to withdraw.

Mr. Woodgeard reiterated that it is not that Council does not think that this is not an important issue, but due to the fact that this would not take effect until 2023, is not good with the possible needs of the City income tax.

President Uhl stated that he agrees with the sentiments of Mr. Woodgeard and stated that this is not City Council not being in favor of supporting the Park’s. It is President Uhl’s belief that the Park’s will receive significant support of this issue with the general public when it is time to place it on the ballot. He also thanked the Park Board members in attendance for their service to the City.

President Uhl asked if there is any discussion on the motion to withdraw, with none, he requested the Clerk to call the roll. The motion to table carried 8-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Schoonover made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Groff. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:51 p.m.

Teresa Lee Sandy, Clerk of Council