

CITY OF CLEVELAND
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 13, 2020
MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The City Council Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Cleveland was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Stanley at 6:32 p.m.

Due to the orders of U.S. President Donald Trump and Georgia Governor Brian Kemp to conduct social distancing, the meeting is closed to the public to physically attend. The meeting is held through teleconferencing, in which the public may dial in and listen and be a part of the proceedings.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Nan Bowen, Kevin Stanley, and Bradley Greene

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by Bradley Greene, seconded by Nan Bowen, and carried unanimously, the Mayor Pro Tem and City Council approved the agenda of the City Council Meeting of April 13, 2020.

2020-12 BUILDING PERMIT RATE AMENDMENT – 2ND consideration and possible adoption

Mr. O’Bryant explained the building permit rates have not been increased since 2004. The rates are intended to cover the costs of building permitting and inspections.

Mr. O’Bryant did not receive comments of all of the proposed rate increases throughout the week.

On motion by Bradley Greene, seconded by Nan Bowen, and carried unanimously, the Mayor Pro Tem approved the seconded consideration and adopted 2020-12 Building Permit Rate Amendment. The rate increase is scheduled to go into effect July 1, 2020.

2020-13 WATER AND SEWER RATE AMENDMENT – 2ND consideration and possible adoption

Mr. O’Bryant recapped the details of the water/sewer rate increase.

- The City operates the City Utilities - Water and Sewer Departments - as enterprise funds. These departments operate from the revenue collected from the sale of water and sewer services. (SPLOST and grant funds have help pay for some of the capital projects for water and sewer.) This also includes any debt service owed by the city for large construction related projects.
- When needed the City Council has reviewed water and sewer rates as system improvements and expansion have been anticipated and planned, and established rates to cover the cost of operations and debt service.

The technology to address the environmental standards and expansion is very costly. The City will need to seek long term financing to construct the plant upgrade from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA). GEFA provides long term loans for water, wastewater and solid waste management infrastructure. The City currently has two loans with GEFA for the expansion of the Truelove Road (US 129 South) sewer line project and the US 129 North project. The debt service for these loans are part of the operations and management of the enterprise fund for the Water and Sewer Department, which is funded by water and sewer revenue. The last rate increase was in 2015.

2020-13 WATER AND SEWER RATE AMENDMENT – 2ND consideration and possible adoption
Continued

On motion by Bradley Greene, seconded by Nan Bowen, and carried unanimously, the Mayor Pro Tem and Council approved the second consideration and adopted 2020-13 Water and Sewer Rate Amendment. The rate increases will go into effect July 15, 2020, July 15, 2021, and July 15, 2022. This is in line with the city's billing cycle.

2020-14 SOLID WASTE FEE SCHEDULE AMENDMENT – 2ND consideration and possible adoption

Mr. O'Bryant explained the costs of providing sanitation services has increased throughout the years. The last rate increase enacted was in 2016. The city needs to start a capital reserve for a new sanitation truck. The White County transfer station has also increased tipping fees to dispose of garbage. The department is meant to sustain itself through sanitation fees.

On motion by Nan Bowen, seconded by Bradley Greene, and carried unanimously, the Mayor Pro Tem and Council approved the second consideration and adopted 2020-14 Solid Waste Fee Schedule Amendment. The rate increases will go into effect July 15, 2020, July 15, 2021, and July 15, 2022. This is in line with the city's billing cycle.

MEG MBUGUA – RINDT-MCDUFF ASSOCIATES – GEFA LOAN AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT COSTS ESTIMATES

Ms. Meg Mbugua, Rindt-McDuff Associates, gave an update on the design and loan information for the wastewater treatment plant improvements.

The group has completed the loan application to submit to GEFA. The loan amount requested is \$12.6 million, with \$1.2 million assigned to contingency. The city plans to submit to GEFA to be reviewed in May 2020. The next available review would be in August, so there is a push to get the documents to GEFA for the May agenda.

The environmental process has started and the engineers are 25% complete with the design.

Mr. O'Bryant asked the council to approve the application to submit to GEFA for funding.

On motion by Bradley Greene, seconded by Nan Bowen, and carried unanimously, the Mayor Pro Tem and Council voted to submit the application to GEFA for funding the improvements to the Cleveland Wastewater Treatment Plant in the amount of \$12,655,629.00.

TOM O'BRYANT – CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Tom O'Bryant, City Administrator, gave an update on the Oak Springs facility. New wiring will need to be installed for security and alarms. Mr. O'Bryant mentioned Chief Foster would like to move in on April 24 and 25, but Mr. O'Bryant did not think the move would happen until the following week. He expects the council will be able to hold the May 11 council meeting at Oak Springs.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Mr. O'Bryant gave an update of the shelter in place order issued by the governor. There are several businesses asking for relief. Mr. O'Bryant informed the White County Chamber of Commerce has information on its website which provides information for relief through small business loans.

Mr. O'Bryant read a list of what the governor feels is an essential business, which includes public health, emergency, infrastructure, utilities, etc. A complete list is available on the governor's website. The governor's website provides guidelines from public health on what is required if a business opens for operations.

The council previously approved city hall to be closed until April 16. The shelter in place has been extended until April 30 with social distancing until May 13. Mr. O'Bryant asked the council approve city hall continue to stay closed to public access until May 13 to limit exposure. Customers continue to pay utility bills by paying online or dropping off payments in the drop box. Tonya Abernathy continues to process building permits by working with applicants online and through email.

Nan Bowen asked if city personnel have enough protective gear. Chief John Foster answered his department is in good shape. Chief Foster informed the city clerk provided masks to his department and Ms. Charlie LaVelle continues to research and order the supplies needed. Chief Foster added David Murphy, White County Emergency Management Director, continues to communicate with his department and providing unmet needs.

2. Public comments – Ms. Tedi Boling questioned the council on how they could approve a rate increase when there are people out there that can barely manage to pay their bills during this crisis. Mr. O'Bryant answered the rate increase would not go into effect until July and would hope there is an upturn in economy. The increase is an incremental increase of 2.5% each year for the next three years.

Ms. Boling questioned what the city will do with the increase. Mr. O'Bryant explained the city has been mandated to update the wastewater treatment plant and the city's rates have to prove the city can cover the cost of repaying a loan. The city also has aging water lines that need to be replaced and the need for additional water sources.

Ms. Boling asked of the city's water sources. Mr. O'Bryant informed the city's water sources are through wells and water purchased from the White County Water Authority. Ms. Boling asked if the county and the city had separate water systems and was told yes.

Mr. O'Bryant explained the city's rates were much lower than the White County Water Authority.

Ms. Boling stated there are 1000's unemployed and she is disgusted the rates would be increased during this time. She asked if there were measures in place to not turn off water for non-payment. Mr. O'Bryant referred to the guidelines of the governor. Ms. Boling asked if the council would reconsider the increase if the crisis continues. Mr. O'Bryant explained the need of the improvements and offered to meet with Ms. Boling to go over the rate schedule and the projects to be funded.

OLD BUSINESS

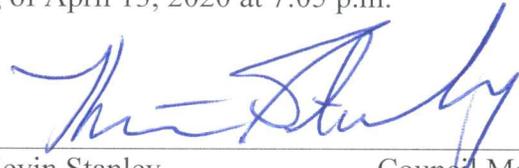
1. The minutes of March 2020 were signed.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Nan Bowen, seconded by Bradley Greene, and carried unanimously, the Mayor Pro Tem and Council voted to adjourn the City Council Meeting of April 13, 2020 at 7:05 p.m.

VACANT

Office Vacant/open Seat Mayor



Kevin Stanley, Council Member
 Ward No. 3
 Mayor Pro Tem



Nan Bowen, Council Member
 Ward No. 1



Bradley Greene, Council Member
 Ward No. 4

VACANT

Office Vacant/open Seat Council Member
 Ward No. 2

ATTEST: 

Connie Tracas, City Clerk

