

A Regular Meeting of the Otsego City Commission was held on Monday, February 21, 2022.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro-Tem Withee at 7:00 p.m. with the following Commissioners present: Brent Milhiem, Dustin McNees and Lauri Krueger. Absent: Mayor Trobeck. Also present: City Manager, Aaron Mitchell; Finance Director Storbeck; Police Chief Misner; Fire Chief Weber; and City Attorney Mullett.

Commissioner Milhiem moved to excuse Mayor Trobeck, seconded by Commissioner Krueger. CARRIED.

The audience joined the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

On a motion by Commissioner McNees, seconded by Commissioner Krueger, the previous Regular and Workshop Meeting Minutes were approved, as submitted. CARRIED

Commissioner Krueger moved to add under “Agreements” the – Consideration of an Agreement with Wightman Engineering Services for Watson Road Improvements, seconded by Commissioner Milhiem. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Commissioner McNees moved to remove under “Requests” the – Consideration of the PA 33 Notification Policy, seconded by Commissioner Krueger. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS

None.

I. PRESENTATIONS:

A. COUNTY COMMISSIONER GALE DUGAN UPDATE

County Commissioner Dugan gave an update on current Allegan County activities. He answered questions of the audience.

B. PA 33 OF 1951 - PRESENTATION

Mayor Pro-Tem Withee presented a slide show to illustrate the current state-of-the City in regards to funding. She explained PA 33 of 1951, as a financial tool to create a special assessment district to levy mills to fund Police and Fire. The details of the special assessment district were discussed in detail.

At this time, the Mayor Pro-Tem opened the floor for questions regarding the presentation and PA 33. She explained that this would be an open discussion and not part of the official public hearing. An open discussion (question/answer session) took place with the Commission and the Audience. Fire Chief Weber answered questions regarding the Fire Department and Police Chief Misner answered specific questions regarding the Police Department.

II. PUBLIC HEARING:

A. PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING PROPOSED POLICE AND FIRE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

Mayor Pro-Tem Withee opened the Public Hearing at 8:27 p.m.

Susan Keene, 214 Allen Street – Opposed.

Thomas Magierka, 543 E Hammond – Opposed.

Chuck Moore Jr., 223 E Morrell – Support.

Deb Smith, 424 S Wilmott – Opposed.

Michael Ransbottom, 252 E Franklin – Support.

Jim Misner, 512 Dix – Support.

Bud Smith, 424 S Wilmott – Opposed.

John Pickron, 1104 Barton – Opposed.

Jean Ashley, 1103 Barton – Opposed.

Larry Zuiderveen, 207 Temple – Opposed.

Charles Housel, 379 W Orleans – Opposed.

Karin Breedveld, 1101 Barton – Opposed.

Nick Breedveld, 1101 Barton – Opposed.

Lisa Rickli, 523 S Farmer – Opposed.

Pam Roth, 701 Kay – Opposed.

Tim Brewster, 598 W River – Opposed.

Kevin Lewis, 518 Kalamazoo – Opposed.

Lisa Fraiser, 403 W Orleans – Opposed.

Tim Hutchens, 800 Barton – Opposed.

Candi Dunham, 408 W Orleans – Opposed.

Nancy Pagano, 440 W Orleans – Opposed.

Angela Newton, 1002 Comstock Court – Opposed.

David Fouch, 359 W Franklin – Opposed.

Lori Beason, 709 Barton – Opposed.

Al Radspieler, PO Box 266, Hopkins – Opposed.

Richard Paff, 211 W Morrell – Opposed.

The City Clerk Received two emails: Kim Blagg – Opposed; and Grant Mitchell Opposed.

A petition was turned into the City Clerk with two hundred nineteen (219) signatures in opposition.

The Public Hearing was closed at 9:26 p.m.

III. PLANNING AND ZONING:

IV. ORDINANCES:

V. REQUESTS:

- A. CONSIDERATION OF THE PA 33 NOTIFICATION POLICY – *Removed from the Agenda.*

VI. AGREEMENTS:

- A. CONSIDERATION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH WIGHTMAN ENGINEERING FOR HELEN AVENUE & JOHN STREET – TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Commissioner McNees moved to authorize the agreement with Wightman Engineering for the Helen Avenue and John Street Topographical Survey, as presented, seconded by Commissioner Krueger. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- B. CONSIDERATION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH WIGHTMAN ENGINEERING – WATSON ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

City Manager Mitchell explained that this project will be eligible for a \$200,000 Road Project Grant. Commissioner McNees moved to authorize the agreement with Wightman Engineering for Watson Road Improvements, as presented, seconded by Commissioner Krueger. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

VII. RESOLUTIONS:

- A. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 2022-05 – PA 33 RESOLUTION #2 – ESTABLISHING PUBLIC SAFETY SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT AND CALLING PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Milhiem moved to postpone Resolution 2022-05, so that the City can review the petition that was presented, seconded by Commissioner McNees. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VIII. APPOINTMENTS:

IX. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

MANAGER’S REPORT

The City Manager gave updates on the following:

1. Water Projects
2. Thanked the audience for attending and reiterated that “his door is always open.”
3. He asked if the Commission had any questions.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Diane Housel, 379 W Orleans – she asked what the next step would be and how the residents will be notified. City Manager Mitchell stated that it depended on the petition. The petition will be reviewed and if there are enough signatures, the Special Assessment District will not be

formed. The City Commission would have a choice to place PA 33, on a ballot, if the petition is verified – this is their choice. If the petition is not verified, it would be the choice of the City Commission how to proceed. He stated that he will communicate the status of the petition on the City's website.

Mr. Pickron, 1104 Barton – he commented that as he was getting signatures for the petition he found that the business owners were opposed. He commented that both restaurants were opposed to it. He stated that it is hard for businesses to make ends meet already. He commented that “we have to manage our budgets and I would like the City to do the same.” He asked the City attorney if PA 33 allowed the City to set aside funds for future spending. City Attorney Mullett stated that it is allowed by law and yes, that can be done.

David Fouch, 359 W Franklin – he asked for more information of the City's website and to keep it up to date. He requested that more information be put on the website regarding the progress of the Special Assessment District.

Al Radspieler, PO Box 266 Hopkins – he asked the City Attorney what office she worked out of and what the cost to the City was. Attorney Mullett indicated that she worked out of Grand Rapids and the cost to the City is approximately \$210/hour.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner McNeas – he thanked the audience for attending. He commented that usually one or two people attend the meetings. He stated that there will be better communication. He commented that he appreciated the petition and the concerns of the citizens. He commented that of the people that spoke at the public hearing, there were three people in support and twenty-six opposed. He commented that this will be taken into consideration. He stated that the people elected him and this affects him as well. He commented that any changes to the Police Detective position, Police Department and Fire Department will hurt him as well, if it is not fixed. He stated that the State keeps taking money away. He announced to the audience that the City Commission meets the first and third Monday of the month. He commented that the City's Budget is online, and asked that citizens bring ideas to the Commission. He stated that he liked having the big crowds at the meetings and invited them to come back. He stated that there will be no taxation without representation.

Commissioner Milhiem – he echoed Commissioner McNeas's comments. He stated that it was nice to see a crowd in attendance with their passion and drive. He commented that “we did hear your voices, and they are important to us.” He stated that options are going to have to be weighed and find out ways to do this and not deficit spend. He commented that at the first meeting on February 7, it was appreciated that citizens came and looked at our needs. He commented that unfortunately, we have all been affected by Covid. At this time, he asked Fire Chief Weber how many lives have been saved by the First Responders and how many pinning's have been held for the firemen. Fire Chief Weber stated that in the last seven years there have been five “saves”, and numerous pinning's of firefighters for their accomplishments. He stated that he takes pride in the Fire Department, Police Department and the funding issues need to be taken care of. He thanked the First Responders, Fire Department, and Police Department for their service. He reiterated that he appreciated everyone's voices and support.

Commissioner Krueger – she thanked Police Chief Misner and Fire Chief Weber. She thanked the Fire Department and the Police Department. She thanked the audience for coming to the meeting and for their ideas. She indicated that it hadn't been an easy nineteen months. She commented that it was good to see everyone's faces here tonight. She asked that the citizens come to meetings and bring their ideas. She stated that the Commission is here to listen – not to be sneaky. She thanked everyone who has been here since the beginning of this journey. She thanked her fellow Commissioners.

Mayor Pro-Tem Withee – she thanked the audience for attending. She commented that this was a priority for Mayor Trobeck and she wanted to be the face of this discussion. She encouraged the audience to come to the budget meetings and see how money is spent within the funds. She commented that by coming to the meetings the citizens will have a better understanding of how the City Commission makes decisions. She asked that the community hold Mayor Trobeck in their thoughts and prayers.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Commissioner McNees, seconded by Commissioner Krueger. CARRIED – 9:49 p.m.

Angela M. Cronen, MMC
City Clerk