

City of Springdale Council

September 20, 2023

President of Council Vanover called Council to order on September 20, 2023

The governmental body and those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. McNear provided the Invocation.

Mrs. McNear took roll call. Council members Anderson, Ghantous, Hawkins, Jacobs, Ramirez, Sullivan-Wisecup, and Vanover were present.

President Vanover: Council, before we go over the minutes, we have added a "5a" in that we have several Police introductions. I don't know why they're here (laughter).

The minutes of the September 6, 2023 meeting were considered. Mrs. Ghantous made a motion to accept the minutes; Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup seconded. The minutes were approved with seven affirmative votes.

Introduction and Swearing in of Police Officers

Mr. Jones: Thank you. We actually have several introductions tonight, and if you'll give us just a moment, Mayor (Webster), if you want to jump in there.

Mayor Webster: Let's have our new Police Chief come down and handle the introductions. This is Chief Butler, in case anyone has forgotten.

Chief Butler: Thank you Mr. Mayor. Our first officer, Officer Tyler Noell. Tyler, if you want to come down. Tyler is a 2019 graduate of Oak Hills High School. He holds an Associate Degree from the University of Cincinnati, which he obtained in 2022. He just recently graduated from the University of Cincinnati, Clermont College. We're extremely happy to have Tyler on board with us.

Mayor Webster: I guess, Brian (Uhl), we're going to have a change of plans here.

Mr. Uhl: Yes. We'll do the new officers, and we'll introduce Officer Teague as well, and we'll swear them in.

Chief Butler: Officer Teague if you want to come down. Andy, is a home-grown product of Springdale. Graduated from Princeton High School in 1994. He attended the Police Academy in 1997, worked for several agencies before landing at the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office where he worked from 2006 until 2023. Andy is a legacy. His father is a retired Springdale Police Officer. He worked here from 1976 until 1998. Andy brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the department which we are going to very much exploit.

Mayor Webster swore in Officer Tyler Noell. (applause)

Mayor Webster swore in Officer Andy Teague. (applause)

Mayor Webster: Just one footnote, this young man is a second generation Springdale Police Officer. His father was an officer for many, many years, and happen to know him and work with him, and he's a good man. (applause)

Chief Butler: Lieutenant Schulz is a graduate of Wright State University, where he holds a Bachelor Degree in Urban Affairs. Mike joined the Springdale Police Department in 2000 as a Police Officer. He's worked through the years in many assignments in the department. At each level, he has excelled in each position. He was promoted to Sergeant in 2011, where he served as Patrol Sergeant for several years. In 2014, he was assigned to the Investigative Section where he oversaw the Detectives from 2014 to 2022. Lieutenant Schulz was selected for Acting Lieutenant in November 2022. His experience has prepared him to take on these tasks and he has filled the open Lieutenant spot since late last year. Mike is a wealth of knowledge being here a relatively short period of time myself, and has helped me in this journey as we progress with the Springdale Police Department in the future.

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Mayor Webster swore in Lieutenant Mike Schulz. (applause)

Chief Butler: Sergeant (Kayla) Justice is a graduate of McCauley High School in 2009. She attended Northern Kentucky University, where she received a Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice in 2013. Not one to rest on her laurels, she then enrolled at the University of Cincinnati where she obtained her Master Degree in 2014. Prior to coming to Springdale, she was a deputy with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office in the Corrections Division. She served as a Patrol Officer in 2016 after graduating from the Ohio State Highway Patrol Peace Officer Academy. She was promoted to the rank of Corporal in 2021, and then was selected now for this position.

Mayor Webster swore in Sergeant Kayla Justice. (applause)

Chief Butler: Corporal (Derek) Setters is a graduate of Colerain High School in 1989. Served with Honor in the United States Navy for approximately five years. He graduated from the Police Academy in 2006, and worked for the St. Bernard Police Department for 13 years before transferring to the City of Springdale. Derek came here in May 2020, and has been a valuable asset to the team. Earlier this year, we had an opening for Corporal, and Derek was selected out of the pool of candidates.

Mayor Webster swore in Corporal Derek Setters. (applause)

President Vanover: Well, just a word of congratulations and welcome to the new ones to the family, congratulations to the growth. It's always a pleasure when we have the Police Department here. It fills it up, and gives us that "warm and fuzzy" feeling. Officer Teague, I'm proud to say, grew up in our neighborhood and came on while his dad was still in service, so, it's kind of neat to see that, and for disclosure purposes, my brother-in-law's cousin is Sergeant Justice back there, and you knew she had to be good because I know he is. But, again, congratulations. It's always great to see all of you here. Just thank you for your service and your time and please be safe out there.

Mayor Webster: Just a couple of comments. When we were interviewing for a new Police Chief, I very distinctly remember us telling especially Chief Butler here that we were very proud of the talent that we have in our Police Department. We thought we had a lot of depth and a lot of potential, and we were looking for somebody to lead that group, and I think that with what we did here tonight, with the new officers, I think we just added more quality to the depth, and, I think that by promoting these people, it shows that we've got some great people in the ranks, and I think the Police Department has some many great years ahead of them. So, we're very proud of you guys and girls. Keep up the great work, and, like Mr. Vanover says, "Stay safe out there". Thank you.

Committee and Official Reports

Civil Service Commission

Mr. Coleman: Before I get started, I'm going to allow everybody to go ahead and leave. Springdale Civil Service Commission did meet on September 7th in the Springdale Municipal Building, and all members were present. In addition to the members of the Civil Service Commission, also present was Mr. Brian Uhl, the Assistant City Administrator, along with Stephanie Morgan, Human Resources Administrator. A variety of different topics were discussed, but, what is I think appropriate for tonight is to highlight that within the area of the Firefighter II/EMT and the Firefighter II/Paramedic hiring process, we shared the discussion regarding current candidates under review. We talked about options for physical agility testing, and, having had that discussion, we concluded that it's necessary to keep the process moving, and, so, as a result, a physical agility test is planned for October 19th for the Firefighter positions as we continue to build up the ranks and continue with the staffing. So, again, anyone out there seeing this, if you're interested, continue to show your interest by being part of the continuous process, which is through National Testing Network. So, again, physical agility test is planned for October 19th. The City of Fairfield has been so kind within their Fire Department to allow us to use their facilities for the testing. We're looking at other alternatives in the event that that would not become available down the road, but, so far, things are working out, and we certainly appreciate their efforts. Also, within the Police Department, due to a recent resignation, and

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Mr. Coleman (continued): also a retirement later this year coming up, a timeline for a new Police Clerk process was presented, and following discussion, Mrs. Darby made a motion to waive the testing requirements for the position of Police Clerk, and also approved the timeline as proposed. That position, as most of you are probably aware, is a little tricky in the sense of the actual work, and, as a result, it requires someone with a unique skill set in order to be successful in the position, and that's why we decided to waive the testing so that we could focus on the resume, and focus of the skills. With that, our next meeting is scheduled for October 5th. Any questions? (None) Thank you.

President Vanover: Thank you sir.

Rules and Laws

Mrs. Ghantous

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No report

Finance Committee

Mr. Hawkins: The Finance Committee met on September 6th. All members were present. On discussion, we had a presentation from Chief (Anthony) Stanley and the Fire Department regarding a request for a new tower, or ladder truck. The cost of that would be approximately \$1.8 million dollars. Note that the price has doubled in the last nine to ten years from where it was. It has incrementally gone up every three or four years. The company that manufactures our current vehicle is out of business. It has been out of business. So, across the street at the firehouse, they're having to find ways to "MacGyver" with regard to fixing things, and it's to a point where they need a new truck. So, going through that, the buildout is approximately three to four years from the point that that would be approved, if that's approved by Council. And, have time to go through and finance that, or work through some of those billing opportunities. But, the Finance Committee had gone through the presentation and thought that it was a good idea and would make the recommendation for Council to consider the purchase of said vehicle. If there's any questions, I'd be happy to answer them to the point, or if there's anything else Mr. (Joe) Ramirez has to add.

Mr. Ramirez: I just will add that with the \$1.8 million dollar cost, and as you mentioned three years for a buildout, we do not have to pay for the device until we receive the product. So, and, with the increased cost year over year, it's best to order now, lock in that price, and not have to come up with the revenue until we receive the product.

Mr. Hawkins: You can pretty much count on it that if we blink, it will be a \$2 million dollar ordeal within two years.

Mayor Webster: As Mr. Ramirez just reported, we don't have to pay for this until we take delivery on it. So, we're probably looking at maybe three years, four outside. So, that gives us time to try to figure out how we're going to pay for this. And, almost without exception, I think all the Fire Department and the Fire Equipment in the past has we've financed it over three years. But, there's no way that we want to try and do this over three years. This is a 23 year investment, and, so, I would ask the Finance Committee to try and seek some financing to drag this out as long as possible to lower those payments. And, just a little side note, I can remember when we replaced the first one; it was \$275,000 and we all fell out of our seats. We said, "You've got to be kidding me; \$275,000 for a fire truck?" Well, \$1.8 million (dollars) today. So, needless to say, that was a few years ago.

Mr. Jones: One of the questions that came up at Finance was the length of the terms with regard to how long you could stretch it out. Mr. Jeff Williams in Finance, our Director there, has looked into it some, and, obviously we can do three, four, and five, and then, he said that there's even some that's offering seven years, if that's something of interest to it. Again, we won't be making that decision again for a few years, but, just as a "heads up" he feels pretty comfortable that we can go anywhere from three to seven (years).

Mrs. McNear: Yes, and there is no deposit that's due during these three to four years while we wait, and, again, as Mr. Jones has mentioned that we can extend the number of years to pay for it, who knows what the interest rates will be then. Hopefully it's going to be something more reasonable than what the environment looks like today. But, you know, we can do something more creative, I say "we", I won't be here, but, you know, something more creative. Perhaps we start putting some money aside for this because we know it's going to

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Mrs. McNear (continued): be a very large payment that's due, but, you know, it's just going to have to get creative, but, if you think about it, this is a piece of equipment that we will have for a very, very long time and, if you also think about it, none of us are probably driving a 20 year old piece of equipment, and, the Fire Department does an excellent job of maintaining their equipment to the point that they do keep this equipment around for decades and they try to maintain it to the point that they do "MacGyver" type of magic to keep the equipment going for as long as possible because they know the equipment is so very costly and it gets to the point that the parts are no longer manufactured, and they do create this magic to keep them going. So, we want to make sure that we recognize the fact that they do keep these things going as long as they possibly can. But, you know, there comes a time that we just have to pay the piper and come up with the millions of dollars it takes, or, we have to face the facts that we're not going to be able to maintain our own Fire Department and we'll have to go to other means to maintain that type of a service. Thank you.

Mayor Webster: The other thing we talked about in the Finance Committee, and, so don't be surprised if this issue surfaces, we could create a retirement fund; a fire engine debt retirement fund and start putting money into there, and then we've got, I think we're going to have some money left out of the American Rescue Plan money that has to be spent by the end of the year. Now, the outlet there is we can just transfer it into the General Fund and then pay whatever we want out of it, or, we can maybe earmark some of that money to go into this retirement fund and then each year, put something away, so that once we get hit with the big bill, \$1.8 million dollars, we've got something to offset that; some down payment at least.

Planning Commission

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: Planning Commission met on September 12th. We only had six people in attendance. We swore in Michelle Miller, and we had Planet Aid Donation Center at 600 Kemper Commons Circle, and it failed 0-6. It was one of those donation boxes where you can put items; shoes, and clothing, and things like that. They wanted to put it in the parking lot of Sam's where they had planned for the fuel pumps to go; right next to the fuel pumps. Planning Commission just did not feel like this was the location or the right place. With the U-Haul being right there, we were afraid that people would put big items like couches and chairs and things like that also out there and that they wouldn't get picked up for days and days, and so that one failed 0-6. We had Pretzel Baron Ditsch and that was a 1100 East Kemper Road. That was a Final Development Plan to PUD. That was the development plan that came to us before, and pretty much exactly the same. And that passed 6-0, and then Wawa came with two different applications; one was for the site signage and that was approved 6-0, and they also came for the Days Inn pole sign because it's on their property, and they came and that was voted 6-0 that they would keep it with the Days Inn, and cleaned up and looking nice. And, that is all that I have.

Board of Zoning Appeals

Mrs. Ghantous

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No report

Board of Health

Mr. Jacobs: The Board of Health met last Thursday. It had been the first meeting after the big summer hiatus, so, there were a lot of miscellaneous items to bring up. In terms of the Vaccines For Children (VFC) Program that we constantly are running, just a summary of it; 300 vaccines were given to 100 kids over the summer. In terms of COVID, there are some numbers that have gone up. If you've been watching the news you might have seen it. As far as we are hearing, the new variant isn't as dangerous as previous ones, and so we've had a couple of variants like that. The new booster is available, but the biggest thing the nurse wanted us to communicate is that it's no longer free. If you don't have health insurance, there are programs for that. But, if you have health insurance and you want the new booster, you want to go through your doctor, or through a CVS-type pharmacy to get that booster. As far as I'm concerned, the recommendations are still the same. If you have vulnerabilities, you're older, you have immune problems, then it's recommended. We didn't discuss the recommendation of whether or not to get that booster, because there's still a lot of gray area. It's a fresh new booster. There was another grant of \$200,000 that the Board of Health gets to spend until December 2024. The Board of Health received some kudos from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) for a great job overcoming perceptions about HPV vaccines. If you're familiar with HPV vaccines there's a perception that it's just for people who are sexually active, but there's a ton of other benefits for HPV vaccinations, and, as I said, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) gave

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Mr. Jacobs (continued): some kudos to our local department for some great numbers in terms of distributing HPV shots. Food program update; White Castle is up and running after their remodel. Badmos African Market on West Kemper is up and running. There's a new pizza place Pizzeria Da Tonino and they need customers, and there were several members of the Board that had gone there and said, "Great pizza", but we need to fill those seats. Sam's is offering sushi and that's up and running. There's a mobile truck called Mr. BBQ operating in the City with a license. And, to me, one of the biggest stories was that the old SMOQ is now called Ida Mae's. They'll be operating on October 2nd. Next to Pappadeaux's. So, that is finally occupied. The last item is that on October 3rd there will be the Health Fair/Business where you can get chili and flu shots among other things. Unless there are any questions, that's all I have.

Capital Improvements

Mrs. Ghantous

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No report

O-K-I

Mr. Anderson: OKI Board met on September 14th. There are three major items that we covered. The OKI Board approved a freight plan for the region. It's a big deal for our region how much involvement OKI did to get that put together with the conference and the material if you're interested in the impact that freight has on our region. If you go to the OKI website, you can see the entire plan there and there's some neat graphics and data that might be interesting. There are also minor updates to the TIP (Transportation Improvement Plan) Plan, that's where OKI gives out money for projects that we're oftentimes beneficiaries of. There was some minor updates to that. And, the last thing worth mentioning is there was a presentation on regional demographics. It talked about what's happening in terms of population count, ages in our region. That data is available for anyone that's interested in looking at data and looking at how age is shifting, how population is moving from the City to rural or rural back. What else was interesting is during that presentation, Springdale was called out as a hot growth area and they called out the cutting edge, or leading edge transitions from offices to living space as something that other communities should look into, so, our apartment changes that are happening in the mall were both called out in the meeting as exciting growth for the region. So, I thought that was fun. That's all I have. Thank you.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Webster: I don't have a whole lot to report. Our SOS did start meeting again today. We took a summer vacation as Council does. Ours is three months, but, anyway. Needless to say, the first order of business was looking ahead to our Christmas program, and, something that's taking place that's going to be very exciting our manager of our physical fitness facility, Elizabeth Johnson, last year, initiated the Christmas Vendor Village. I think we had eight or ten vendors in there. And, it was very, very well received. As a matter of fact, I think we were going to have it outside and the weather drove us inside. So, this year, we don't care what the weather is going to be. We're going to have it inside. And, we can accommodate, or she can accommodate 42 vendors and she already has 14 signed up. So, a third of the vendors have been taken already, and that's more vendors than we had last year, and so we're really looking forward to filling that up. It costs \$50 and it goes from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., so six hours. We think that that is going to be a good follow up to the 5k run. Is that what you guys run 5k? So, that will take place at 9:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m., and then this will last until 3:00 in the afternoon. So, as you start making out your Christmas list, please keep the SOS in mind, and you'll be hearing more about that as we get closer. Thank you very much.

Clerk of Council/Finance Director

Mrs. McNear: I have the General Fund update through August 31, 2023. For receipts, based on the net receipt budget of \$24.123 million dollars, we have received \$15.872 million dollars. That is based on five general fund receipt sources, which are Earnings Tax, Real Estate Taxes, Paramedic Services, Local Government Funds, and Transient Tax for a subtotal of \$14.620 million dollars, which is 92%. For the General Fund Expenditures through August 31st, based on a net expenditure budget of \$24.108 million dollars, we have spent \$14.297 million dollars, which is 56%. The General Fund balance through August 31, 2023 is \$8.202 million dollars. That concludes my report. Thank you.

Mayor Webster: Could I amend my report?

President Vanover: Sure.

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Mayor Webster: Thank you. We had an event take place today down at the Community Center; our State of the City address which I gave a few words. Andy (Kuchta) gave an update on what's happening on the economic development front. We had the developers of Merchant Row gave a presentation, a lot of slides. Very, very impressed with that. It's turned out to be a very nice development. We also had a few slides from the Array up on Sheraton Lane, and that also looks very nice. So, I think we're going to have about 450 additional housing units when both of those are filled. And, the occupancy rates are really going well. Both developers are very, very pleased. As a matter of fact, the one today, I know for a fact is looking at other office buildings that they may want to convert to the same thing. So, I think it's a unique concept, and as they pointed out, it's something that doesn't work in every vacant office building, but it certainly works here, and I think that it complements our other businesses and if we can ever get Tri County Mall off the dime there, I think it's really going to complement that development. So, anyway, it was a very nice luncheon. We had about 85 people there, I think. We had three or four of our Council people there. A lot of our Department Directors were there, a lot of business people. So, anyway, it was a nice affair put on by the Chamber of Commerce. Julie (Matheny) good job. And, looking forward to next year. Thank you.

Administrator's Report

Mr. Jones: We enjoy bringing folks in that either get hired with the City, or and/or get promoted. Brian (Uhl) and I get to spend a lot of time with the folks through the hiring process and the promotional opportunity. But, we hope that you enjoy that. This Council always seems so supportive of us bringing them in, so we're going to continue to do that unless you tell us otherwise. We think it gives you a "snapshot" of the kind of people, the qualified folks that we bring before you, the qualities and backgrounds and not just education, but experience and all the things they bring with that. I think the introduction the Chief and the other Department Directors do is important and gives you, again, a little idea of what you're hiring and what ultimately the residents/taxpayers are paying for. So, want to congratulate those folks that were either hired or promoted, and, again, unless you tell us otherwise, we appreciate the support of the elected officials. Thank you.

Law Director's Report

Mr. Braun

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No report

Engineer's Report

Mr. Riggs: Thank you. So, we're making progress on the Northland Boulevard Reconstruction Project. We're in the right-of-way phase. We have the appraisals. They're currently under review. Hopefully we'll get the review completed this week and get them signed, then offer letters can go out next week, and then we can start beginning the negotiations in acquiring the right-of-way. The goal is to have all the right-of-way acquired by mid-July. We're also working on an OPWC (Ohio Public Works Commission) funding application. Applications are due September 29th. We're hopefully going to be able to submit that by next week Friday, so, a week early. We're looking to request a little over \$1 million dollars. The goal of that grant application, because you may remember that we submitted one to SORTA (Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority) a few months ago for \$2 million dollars. With the OPWC grant application, the SORTA application, if successful, and all the other grants that we have received, the City would have potentially no money for construction of the improvements. That was our goal all along. Hopefully, we're moving along and I believe that we will be able to achieve that. I'll know more next month. The State Route 4 Urban Paving Project; I'm sure everyone's noticed pretty much that work is, at least the intermediate asphalt is down, they've got the final asphalt surface and pavement markings to go, but, that's going to be wrapped up some time in October. Very similarly, the State Route 747 Urban Paving; they're in about the same spot. Just looking for final asphalt and pavement markings to go down, but, that project is going to be wrapped up by the end of next week. At least that's what the contractor is telling us. The Sheraton Lane Reconstruction Project; that project is substantially complete. There's a few punch list items remaining, but, that project is open. This afternoon, I learned about the Community Center HVAC Replacement Project. I learned that the installation of the smaller units up on the roof, they're going to start next week and take about four weeks to install. There's two larger units that we're still waiting on the arrival of that equipment. But, that's going to happen sometime in February. Then the Crescentville Road State Route 4 to 747 Improvements; the catch basin replacement work began earlier this week. The sewer lining

Mr. Riggs (continued): work that's going on concurrently with that project, that's going to be wrapped up by then next month. So, that work is going to continue pretty much throughout

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the winter. The Tri County Parkway Sidewalk Extension Project; the second reading for the Resolution for the construction funding is going to go before you guys tonight. The designs are about 60% complete. We had a film review meeting last week. Hopefully, get those plans wrapped up towards the end of the year. That's all I had.

Mrs. McNear: Springdale Lake Drive Restoration; the part that the Altafiber and their subs did is terrible. But, I can tell you that the work that my husband has done in our yard is beautiful. So, you can tell I'm not happy. We spent money on it, and he spent an inordinate amount of time redoing the work that they messed up in our yard. So, now we also have to deal with the fact that the neighbors around us that didn't do any work themselves that they just accepted the work that Altafiber did and now they have weeds everywhere, we have to now undo the work that those weeds are blowing into our yard so, not happy that we've had to spend time and money to counteract what they've done. So, please pass that on.

Mr. Riggs: I will.

Mrs. McNear: I won't stop passing it on either.

Mr. Riggs: You shouldn't.

Rental Program Committee	Mr. Anderson	-	No report
Communications	-		None

Communications from the Audience

Ms. Wells: Hello. My name is Katie Wells and I live on Bernhart Court. I came up because I heard mention of one event that happened earlier today at the Rec Center. Like a State of the Union like event. Was that something that was open to the entire public or was it just a Chamber of Commerce and business event?

Mayor Webster: It was not open to the public.

Ms. Wells: Okay. Cool. Is it something we can request to get an update on ourselves? Any of the presentation and documents?

Mr. Braun: It's my understanding that it's not a City sponsored event, that it's the Chamber so, I guess if you were wanting to request, I don't think you could, but I could always say you could reach out to the Chamber and ask them if they recorded it. I don't know if they did. I'm being told they don't.

Ms. Wells: Okay. Do you guys know when the public of Springdale might get an update from the developers as well?

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: Which developers specifically are you wanting?

Ms. Wells: The Artisan. They were mentioned, right. Like they spoke.

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: They were not there. They were just mentioned because it's the same thing that we've spoken in open meeting about was because of funding, inflation, and interest rates, and the lead time on everything right now is out of control, so, that was all that was said about them in general. Everything that was said, was what was said here.

Ms. Wells: I got excited when I heard updates. So, I didn't know if we had any more updates that I could get. Okay. Perfect. Thank you guys so much.

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Ordinance No. 36-2023

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CLERK OF COUNCIL/FINANCE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE BOARD OF HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO ADMINISTER THE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION GRANT AWARD FOR THE INSTALLATION OF SIDEWALKS ALONG TRI-COUNTY PARKWAY IN THE CITY OF SPRINGDALE

Mrs. Ghantous made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 36-2023; Mr. Anderson seconded.

Ordinance No. 36-2023 passed with seven affirmative votes.

Ordinance No. 37-2023

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE PAYMENT OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION INCENTIVES TO FULL AND PART-TIME EMPLOYEES USING FEDERAL PASS-THROUGH AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT GRANTS RECEIVED FROM THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND OHIO OFFICE OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE AND CONTINUED RETENTION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 37-2023; Mrs. Ghantous seconded.

Ordinance No. 37-2023 passed with seven affirmative votes.

Ordinance No. 38-2023

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CLERK OF COUNCIL/FINANCE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH JAKE SWEENEY CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE RAM FOR THE PURCHASE OF TWO 2023 DODGE DURANGO PURSUIT AWD V8 VEHICLES AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mrs. Ghantous made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 38-2023; Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup seconded.

Ordinance No. 38-2023 passed with seven affirmative votes.

Old Business

Mrs. McNear: I do ask for a little bit of indulgence. I do have a long document that I would like to read this evening. So, tonight, I would like to take some time to discuss the temperament of the meetings over the past year, and the contentious atmosphere. Before we get to that, please indulge me for a bit of a personal history lesson. I started my service to this City in the early 1970's, as a 15 year old at the Rec Center. Yes, it will be forever the Rec Center to me, and I don't care what Mayor Norrish thought. It was initially named the Rec Center, so it's always going to be the Rec Center to me. I was paid \$1.35 an hour; below minimum wage to work in the basket room. Many of you are probably saying, "What the heck is the basket room?" And, it is long gone, but that is where people stored their street clothes when they changed to their swimsuits. Not a glamorous job, and actually it was a pretty gross job, but I learned how to be a good employee, work with the public, take on increasing levels of responsibility, working in the office, the party rooms, concession stand, teaching ceramics, gymnastics, and anything else that was asked of me. Does this sound familiar to those who have started their career there or who have children who have? I learned how to live a life of service in Springdale, which I did as a coach, as a Springdale PTA volunteer, treasurer, president, Springdale committee member, Council member, President of Council, Clerk of Council/Finance Director, member of Princeton Scholarship Committee, Chair of Princeton Schools reunions, and more positions of leadership and responsibility that I learned right down the street. I learned about Springdale elections at Princeton High School as a junior in trigonometry class. Odd, I know, but my teacher, the elected Clerk of Council, was being challenged by an upstart, Doyle Webster, and we know how that turned out. I'm grateful for that opportunity and proud to have served my community. I've

Mrs. McNear (continued): done this to be an example to my children, and my grandchildren because service to my community is a privilege, and an expectation not to be

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taken lightly. I had a 45+ year professional private sector career and a 30 year elected career. Now, let me make myself perfectly clear; I am not running for any political office. My aspiration is to be a professional grandmother; the best gig ever. The pay is abysmal, but the benefits can't be matched by any organization. I'm bringing this up tonight because I would like to end my years of service in harmony and enjoy the time I have left up here, after three decades, versus dreading the constant barrage of negativity I feel up here. Every meeting we have, there are two opportunities for Communications from the Audience, where the residents can share their thoughts or concerns on any topic. In many cases, they're Administrative requests which are handed over to our Administration team to address. There's been a lot of frustration from the residents that the Councilmembers don't respond to these requests. It has been explained that it's outside of our area of expertise or responsibility, and many times, which has escalated frustration from the audience. The Administrative questions can be handled outside of Council meetings during business hours. It has escalated to the point that the residents feel they aren't being respected. And, that's because elected officials aren't responding to their questions. I hope you're nodding when you're hearing me say this. So, frankly, the questions are repetitive and getting more disrespectful and louder at each meeting. I can tell you from my perspective only, I'm not speaking for anybody else up here, but, I've taken a lifetime to learn how not to react to negative, rude, or inflammatory comments. I can see the frustration on the audience's faces when you get no reaction, but what do you expect? We hear the same thing every meeting. We truly don't know what you want, and I can image by now you're probably starting to get pretty riled, but, stay with me for a few minutes. Kathy Uetrecht came to Council and spoke a couple of meetings ago. And, I've known Kathy a very long time. We worked on volunteer groups when our children were young, and she nailed it. You want to know why Council is frustrated with the things that you scream at us every meeting? You should read what Kathy said about earning respect. She was aggravated with the Mayor. She told the Mayor that she earned respect by her and her husband's service to the Community, just as we did, everybody up here did. And, I'm not going to read word for word, but I've got the words up here, and I can say it again, if you want, but I'm not going to go into it. The bottom line is we shouldn't have to count who did the most volunteer jobs. We should respect each other as human beings; as neighbors. You don't have to agree with everyone, but the repetitive nature and the abusive tone isn't conducive to who's right or who's wrong, but do we have a real issue that can be resolved, or do you just merely want to vent your frustration on someone with an audience? I'm truly not trying to fan the flames, but, trying to understand the anger because there is anger displayed. No resolution suggested, or issues stated. We're not going to solve it here, and I don't want to debate it. This is just food for thought. Council meetings are business meetings, not picket lines, or rallies where we scream or curse at each other. Let's just agree you detest us, distrust us, you want to embarrass us, cause chaos, fill in the blank at whatever it is that you want other than how awful we are at every meeting. Stop wasting everyone's time. You feel that you aren't respected; we don't either, and we earned it with decades of service to this City. If you have a legitimate issue that we can assist, please bring it forward. But, let's please come to an agreement that the few people in the audience that speak every meeting are dissatisfied with the people on the dais, and the elected officials on the dais don't understand the anger and what you want. The City spends thousands of dollars on legal fees, IT, and other expert's fees and waste employees time pulling public records. If there was something illicit, it would have been blasted everywhere. This is money wasted that could be better spent on improvements to our infrastructure, on new rolling stock. Please stop this wasteful practice. There are no hidden agendas. I sit here and I have people who are my children's ages admonishing us to behave a certain way. And, then I read what they say on social media that I would never say about them or anyone else. And, every meeting I have to listen to how the elected officials should behave better? Believe me when I tell you I've always held myself to a higher standard, and, if you can't take my word for it, call my sons. They will probably buy you a beer and talk your ear off about how rough it was growing up with a mom who's dedicated to doing the right thing, following the rules, and being held to higher standards. We are now in an election phase for the next three months. I'm retiring from public office when my term expires at the end of November. I don't have any "skin in the game" other than I've lived here in Springdale for 54 years. I lived here with my parents, as has my husband. We raised our family here, my grandchildren are here, and extended family; some of them are in the room right now. I want Springdale to remain a great place to live,

Mrs. McNear (continued): work, and recreate. We can't do that if we are at odds amongst ourselves. We live in five square miles. We're likely to see each other at the store, at the Rec Center, at school. We can't hide from each other. We're not Washington D.C. or Columbus. We

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are neighbors and the people sitting beside you aren't infallible, but they devoted their best efforts to make it a better place too, if you agree or not. It breaks my heart to see the awful things on social media written about Springdale. Makes me wonder why would people want to live in such a horrid place. Things that are said by people who grew up here, whose parents were huge contributors to this City, or people who are new to this City who have no idea the contributions that were made to this City, but, perhaps they will learn. For the next three months, I encourage and charge everyone on the floor and the dais to create the behavior we experience every meeting, and exhibit professional behavior. No name calling, no condescending behavior, and no campaigning at the meetings. Now, I'm not asking to be best friends. You continue to hate people in the room just as you did when you walked in here tonight. You can't be in a position of authority without earning enemies. Do you think people on the dais always agree? Nope. We sure don't, and we can still walk out of here at the end of the evening and be friends, or at least be friendly. For my closing statement this evening, I'm going to tell you a true story that happened about 30 years ago or so, when a neighbor called to tell me a new family moved into the neighborhood that was "different" than the rest of us, and asked, "What are we going to do?", and I said, "Go make a batch of cookies, go over and introduce yourself." Different can mean many things, and what it meant then it doesn't apply now because different is ever-changing. So, tonight, I'm going to live those words again. "Hi, I'm Kathy McNear. Neighbors, please help yourself to the cookies and welcome to the neighborhood." (off mic) Thank you. And, here's the cookies. And please let's act like neighbors. Let's be friendly. (applause)

New Business

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None

Meetings and Announcements

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, October 10th at 7:00 p.m. in these chambers.

Mr. Jacobs: The Springdale Board of Health will meet on October 12th adjacent to these chambers.

Mrs. Ghantous: Board of Zoning Appeals will meet Tuesday, September 26th at 7:00 p.m. Oh, Jeff (Anderson) is shaking his head.

Mr. Anderson: Sorry, I was going to buzz in and say the meeting I had announced last week I believe is cancelled.

Mrs. Ghantous: Oh, well never mind. Who used to say that?

Mr. Uhl: Just to echo Mr. Coleman's announcement, the Civil Service Commission will meet Thursday, October 5th at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Conference Room.

Mr. Hawkins: Just bragging on our Health Department Director Matthew Clayton, and I'll butcher the organization, but essentially it is the State Health Department Liaison with the State Legislature, as well as the Governor's Office, but, he was elected a Director here recently with regard to that, so, I think it's kudos for him and the Administration as well.

Communications from the Audience

Ms. Wells: Hello, it's Katie Wells again. I'm not going to rewrite my information because I just spoke earlier. So, I know you are nodding at me and you were addressing a lot of what you said to me, and you had a little bit under eight minutes to say what you had to say, and I only have five. So, I want to make sure that I try to hit on a lot of what you said. There's a lot to unpack, a lot of stuff that wasn't true, a lot of stuff that I agree with. I can't really speak for a lot of the other people, but, I can speak for myself and what I've experienced. And, again, it's a lot of unpack, and it's not really something I wanted to discuss while I was here. It could have been something you could call me on. Please let me have my time. And, it could have been

Ms. Wells (continued): something you called me on. I've offered my phone number to a lot of you numerous times to talk to me about things, but, again, I've said it once and I've said it before, the way you speak to people up here and the way you hear information, it really does matter, and it kind of creates that feeling that people are just not being heard. We don't feel like

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we're really welcome. We feel like we have things to say. We really don't know the right processes even. We don't know how to find the right information, and it's a learning experience. I've learned a lot. So, kind of back tracking, I've learned a lot. I wasn't really involved in local politics. I was young, I grew up in Springdale. My grandparents built their house before (Interstate) 275 was over there. I remember being a kid and watching parades, watching Doyle Webster go down the street in his convertible with flags and candy and it was so exciting, and I bought my house in Springdale so my kids could have a similar experience. I think all of us here want the best for the City of Springdale. I really do, and I really wish we could be neighbors and neighborly and not mean to each other, which is exactly why I got involved in Council and I started coming to meetings. Because, a while ago, there was a new Community Center engagement session where the public was invited to come and learn about the potential of our Rec Center move. And, I actually got a call from someone who works for the Rec because they knew I grew up here and I spend a lot of time at the Rec Center, like, "Hey, you should come to that." "Awesome". And then, I realized there wasn't a lot of communications going out to the public about this meeting we were having about our Rec Center and I was like, "Whoa, what the heck?" Like, nobody knows this is happening. I have to help share the word, so I decided to put it on Facebook, like okay, let's get it out to as many people as we can, as quick as we can that way, all the people can come and learn about what's happening. And, when I went to put it on Facebook, I went to Facebook. Excuse me, it makes me very upset that I'm even in this situation, but, and I didn't want to do this today, but I went to Facebook, and we had a Springdaelian group. I've been it for an eternity, and I went to share it there, and it was blocked, and I was like, "That's really strange" Like, we should all know about this, and then I found out that it was the Mayor's daughter who exclusively ran the group. So, I was confused like why wouldn't we want to share this information to the world? Why wouldn't all of us want to come? So, I tried to share my own little flyer that I put together like, people come, please come. Let's hear about our new Rec Center. And, I ended up being blocked from that group, and I was just fed up with what was happening, so I went to the engagement center and I was so happy to see so many people came, and it just kind of seemed like it was more of a sales pitch and I won't get too deep into it, but, I know a lot of people were upset about it, and, after the engagement center was over, you know, we all asked lots of hard questions, and that's part of the job, right, when you serve for the City, like, you're always going to have hard questions. It's not always going to be sunshine and rainbows, it's going to be difficult. And, after the meeting was over, and I know a lot of you saw it, and I know a lot of you spoke with me on this, the Mayor's wife came up to me upset and she was screaming in my face about how terrible a person I was and I'm like confused because all I was trying to do was invite people to come to this engagement session, but I had no idea why I was being treated that way and then I kept coming to Council meetings, and I kept getting push back from the Mayor and his family, and his friends, and I didn't know what to do and I was recommended by a Council person to call the Police Station because of the harassment and person to track it, and it just didn't go anywhere, it was a dead end. And, things that were said about me on social media by the Mayor's family, and just the digs that I noticed that I really became vocal and not just for me, but when I saw other people being dragged in the mud, I quickly realized from discussing with numerous residents that there's been this weird atmosphere created where people don't feel welcome, and I think that it's really coming to a head now, and, like I said, I can't really speak for a lot of people, there is a lot to unpack here, and I will be more than happy to have a conversation with anyone on anything I've experienced, and I've offered it once, and I'll offer it a million times, you all can call me and discuss this, but, I know I am not the only one who is fed up with the way we feel we get treated. We feel like a nuisance, we feel like when we ask information, and it was even said on the dais, that it was a dumb question. There is never a dumb question. You should always care about your people and them wanting to learn and get involved, and you should never block that. You should want people to come to meetings. You should want people to come here and ask questions. Sometimes they're going to be hard questions, and you're not going to like it, but, that is what happens when you serve people that live in this City. And, I totally agree with you Kathy (McNear). I want it to be neighborly. I do. But, I don't know that that's ever going to happen until this weird vibe and the way that some of the people up here

Ms. Wells (continued): treat people others changes. And, you're right, there is an election coming up, and I really hope it changes. Because there's a lot of people that would love to be here and they have told me that they do not come here because they don't like getting dirty looks from the Mayor's family. They don't like to be talked down to when they're up here on the dais

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from everyone saying sideways comments to them. It's just, I know you guys know. I know you all know. You are all aware, all of you. People are fed up. And, I created a Facebook group because I was blocked from the only other one, and I felt like people needed to be heard. They just need to be heard. They just need to be respected. We can be neighborly to each other. We can get that back. And, I'm going to end that there, and if you want to call me, you can. Thank you.

Update on legislation still in development

Mr. Hawkins: As you review your Internal Memorandum, Item Number I was addressed with Ordinance No. 36-2023; An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor and Clerk of Council/Finance Director to Enter Into an Agreement with the Board of Hamilton County Commissioners to Administer the Community Revitalization Grant Award for the Installation of Sidewalks Along Tri-County Parkway in the City of Springdale. That passed with a 7-0 vote. Item Number II was addressed with Ordinance No. 37-2023; An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor and Clerk of Council/Finance Director to Administer the Ohio EMA First Responder Retention Incentive Grant and Use of City ARPA Funds for Other Eligible Employees and Declaring an Emergency. That passed with a 7-0 vote. Item Number III was addressed with Ordinance No. 38-2023; An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor and Clerk of Council/Finance Director to Enter Into an Agreement with Jake Sweeney Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram for the Purchase of Two 2023 Dodge Durango Pursuit AWD V8 Vehicles and Declaring an Emergency. That passed with a 7-0 vote.

Recap of legislative items requested for next Council meeting

Mr. Hawkins: There are none listed unless there's anything from Council or the Administration.

Mr. Uhl: The only thing I know that we're currently working on is the finalization of the spec and build out of the Fire Department's tower. So, once we get those numbers, we'll bring that before Council next month.

Adjournment

Mr. Hawkins made a motion to adjourn; Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy McNear
Clerk of Council/Finance Director

Minutes Approved:
Tom Vanover, President of Council

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