

**Rittman City Council Met in a
REGULAR MEETING -VIA ZOOM
March 22, 2021 7:00 p.m.**

Members Present: Amanda Nelson, Josh Carey, Dave Williams, Leah Weirick, Melissa Shows and Philip Decker
Members Absent: None
Presiding: Mayor William Robertson

The invocation was given by Tina Heise-Crog of Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Seville, Ohio, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes – March 8, 2021.

Shows moved to approve, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

Workshop

a. **Brian Thunberg from the Regional Income Tax Agency will be Discussing the City’s Transition to RITA for Local Income Tax Collection.** Brian Thunberg discussed the transition to RITA for the City’s local income tax collection. Discussion was had regarding the benefits of RITA as well as the disadvantages. With RITA there would be the option to e-file City Taxes. RITA also networks with the IRS making it easier to file City Tax Forms. RITA will also handle any collection for delinquent accounts. It was also discussed that if RITA does not work out with the City, we can terminate the contract after six months. Each municipality will have one representative and one vote on all matters. Each municipality retains its own right to administer and enforce its own income tax laws. RITA covers about 45% of Ohio municipalities that have an income tax. RITA services taxpays in person, by phone, fax and through their website via secure email. Calls are recorded for quality and security.

Citizens Forum

Traci Cristino – 65 N. Fourth Street. She wanted confirmation that we have not switched yet to RITA.

Old Business

b. **Ord. No. 8220 An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, Amending Section 1163.07 (a) C2 Central Business District of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Rittman. Second Reading.** Ord. No. 8220 was read on second reading. Nelson moved to place on third. Williams requested if he could get a definition of what a cleaning and dyeing plant is? Beshara responded she will try, it was written a long time ago, but she will see what she can find out. All Yeas upon roll call and **motion carried.**

New Business

a. **Ord. No. 8222 An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, Amending the Annual Appropriation Ordinance 8200, as Amended According to the Attached Sheet(s) and Declaring an Emergency. Three Readings.** Ord. No. 8222 was read on first reading. Nelson moved to suspend the rules, all Yeas upon roll call and **motion carried.** Weirick moved to adopt. Weirick stated she is for the amendment, but she wants Council to think ahead into the future. All of the amendments that are done and most of this is grants, so if we deny the grants and send it

back obviously that looks bad on us for future grants. At the beginning of the year when the budget was started, we had a carryover going into next year. After this one we are looking at a negative \$45,000.00 going into next year. If we keep cutting into our carryover balance, eventually we are going to run out of funds. The Safer Grant is paying for one of the employee's salaries, that is ending. The General Fund is going to have to pick up that. Our Fire/EMS Fund, the General Fund helps them as well. There are a lot of things the General Fund takes a hit for. Probably sooner rather than later we are going to have to figure out some way to increase our revenue. Whether we put on a levy, increase our tax or eliminate the credit. Going forward we are going to have to think long and hard on our spending what that looks like five years down the road. We have the Nature Preserve going in, the upkeep of that. There are a lot of roads that need done, water. Just keep that in mind. Carey inquired if we would have the manpower to get these things done by the deadlines that we have to get all of them done? If we are trying to add money, if it happens to be through tax, that is also going to increase our proposed bill to RITA every year as well, there is multiple things to look at when doing that. Do we know if we have the manpower to get all of this stuff done by the deadlines? I know we are going to be cutting it really close. We are going to be stretching people very thin within our Rec Department. Beshara responded that regarding the football field the Grant we received was \$40,000.00 but the Grant is going to cost us more than that. I confirmed today that we don't have to do the football field this year we can do it up until June 30, 2022. As far as the ADA bathroom this will be an opportunity for us to have Fritz parking lot repaved. Engineering Associates is going to give an estimate of what it will cost. The ADA compliant bathroom was also a Grant, so that is going to cost us a little extra money. That one we will be able to do this year. Putting the football field off later is going to greatly help. We are also looking at the Nature Preserve budget with the help of Hull and Associates to see minimally how much it is going to cost us a year. If we can get the appropriation done, we will have the money sitting there, we won't necessarily spend it. That is a big part of it this time. We don't want to send the Grant money back. On the other hand, I am not applying for Grants that are matching Grants, other than Grants we are receiving for roads, water and sewer. Those are the main ones that we need to focus on. Carey responded never turn down free money if you can get it. I didn't know if we were going to be able to get it done then I know there is going to probably going to be some other equipment and things that we probably need to purchase as well for maintaining all these different places. That was another worry that the equipment that we will need is also not really included on this either. Beshara responded how do we manage all of this because there is a lot going on. Is it a credit back, is there an income tax increase that we go to the voters with, is it cutting staff, which we have not enough staff, so I never want to do that. There is a lot for us to think about and I am having a structural engineer coming out tomorrow to look at City Hall and specifically the basement to see can we stay in the building or do we need to go out? Those are all the things, there's a lot of moving parts, there's a lot going on. I am very cognizant of spending money. I'll keep you posted the best that I can as we move forward with all these. All we do is look at trying not to spend money, but yet we have to spend money to take care of our City. Williams stated that he would like to thank Leah and Josh for making these comments. I think their fiscal expertise and just bringing these hard discussions to the forefront is valuable so thank you both. Mayor Robertson wanted to clarify that we get Grant money and the general public doesn't understand the concept of matching funds that has to go into those things as well. The matching funds for the Nature Preserve which were kind of worked off in volunteer labor, but that's not always an option. A lot of times we have to match with dollars out of some account. It can get really expensive for the future. All Yeas upon roll call and **motion carried.**

b. Ord. No. 8223 An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, Authorizing and Directing the Municipal Manager to Execute a Contract with a Regional Council of Governments for the Purpose of Administration and Collection of Municipal Income Tax in the City of Rittman, Ohio and Declaring an Emergency. First Reading. Ord. No. 8223 was read

on first reading. Weirick moved to place on second. Decker inquired what the City's current delinquent balance that is outstanding. Bulp stated that Shelley logged off and she has that information, but he will get it and pass it on to Council. Carey stated he speaks with many people every day that have to deal with RITA on the business side of things or the citizen side of things and none of them like RITA. Even people that used to work for Cities that were RITA Municipalities were overjoyed when they left RITA. I'll just leave it at that and I will keep an open mind. Bulp stated that he grew up in a RITA city, North Canton. I know a lot of people in North Canton. I have never heard any complaints, the people say they like it a lot, like the e-filing options. Working with the State, we didn't receive too many complaints on that end with RITA. I think as with anything else it is not perfect and nothing is perfect, but there are pros and cons certainly. Weirick stated that she works three municipalities that have RITA and they all are very pleased. The City of Norwalk went with them in 2018 and they have residents that complain but the additional revenue that has come in since the switch, it definitely outweighs the complaints that they have heard. Mayor Robertson stated that in the past it would have been much harder to sell because people would come in and Shelley would literally do their taxes for them. Bulp stated that a couple of years ago they had to put a stop to that. I know that was unfortunate and upsetting for a lot of citizens. Mayor Robertson also stated that with City Hall being shut down with Covid we didn't even have the ability for people to come in and do that one-on-one questioning. Williams stated that some time ago we passed something with the Attorney General's office on doing collections. Can you refresh my memory on what that was? Beshara stated that she would ask Shelley. Williams inquired if the contract still exists and we didn't act upon it or if it is null and void, do we know? Challinor said that she would get the legislation to Williams. All Yeas upon roll call and **motion carried**.

c. **Ord. No. 8224 An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, Authorizing the Municipal Manager to Purchase a GMC Savana 2500 Van Equipped with an Aries Camera System from the Ohio Rural Water Association for the Sum not to Exceed \$84,500.00 and Declaring an Emergency. Three Readings.** Ord. No. 8224 was read on first reading. Shows moved to suspend the rules. Carey inquired if this was something we need to do today? Beshara responded that we had budgeted \$100,000.00 for this purchase. Mike was able to find a used van for the same purpose. He has it actually in his possession. He has been looking at it. Bulp stated this is an item that was on our capital plan. I think Mike did a great job, because we had \$100,000.00 budgeted for just the camera. This is \$84,000.00 for the camera and the van completely tricked out with computes and such that would be necessary to run it. I really commend Mike on tracking this down and it is also going to save us money in what we spend every year sending cameras down into the lines. Shows inquired if the is what we were going to use the old SWAT truck for, correct? Bulp stated we did explore that as an option and did not go that route. Mike Brown responded the van has air conditioning and heat, its own generator. It has a wash down tank for when the camera comes back out. One thousand feet of camera line. The van itself only has 2,500.00 miles on it. When they purchased the van, it wasn't what they wanted to use it for. They wanted to go a different route. It worked perfect for us. I've had it in our possession for about three weeks now and I could have used it a half of dozen times but I promised them until we purchase it, I won't use it. So, it has just been sitting there. Williams inquired what year it was? Brown responded the van was a 2015 the camera is about the same. The camera has about as much use on it as the van does. Keep in mind we have to keep up with EPA and they recommend that you camera your sewers every five years. When EPA says that they recommend they basically say camera your sewers every five years or we are going to make you. I am just getting a little bit ahead of the curve. We spend on average \$40,000.00 per year to camera sewers. We could spend that \$40,000.00 on rehabbing our sewers, fixing a crack or a collapse. Our sewer plant on a heavy rain, our average flow it 700,000 on a rain we are at 3 - 4 million gallons. I would love to be able rehab our sewers and get it down to a million

when it rains. That's my goal. All Yeas upon roll call and **motion carried**. Carey moved to adopt, all Yeas upon roll call and **motion carried**.

City Manager's Remarks

Thank you to the RITA team for attending this evening.

The City of Rittman will receive approximately \$1.28 million dollars through the latest Federal stimulus bill. Matt will have more information in his report on how we will be able to use the money.

Myself, Chuck, Buck and Garrick are working on a plan to make improvements to our parks with an emphasis on the Fritz Street parking lot, installing the ADA compliant bathroom and also, we are looking at equipment in all the parks to ensure its safety for our children. The Service Department will be removing stumps that they can manage and Chuck is looking into renting a machine to remove those that are too large. Also, tomorrow the baseball fields will be cleaned up as we will borrow the mayor's Steiner with a power rig, we are renting which will remove all grass from the infield to be manicured for the season. Thank you, mayor for your generosity. Regarding the grant we received for the youth football field, we have until June of 2022 to build the field and scoreboard and we are going to plan accordingly so, the field will not be installed this fall. This will give us more time to plan and prepare for the installation of the field.

The IRS has extended the filing deadline to May 17th from the April 15th deadline. The federal tax filing deadline postponement to May 17, 2021, only applies to individual federal income returns and tax (including tax on self-employment income) payments otherwise due April 15, 2021, not state tax payments or deposits or payments of any other type of federal tax. The IRS website has more information for anyone interested at [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov).

The Second Street waterline project is close to completion. Thanks to Mike and his crew along with Dirt Dawg for all the hard work they are putting toward the project.

Last week, we experienced another break on our main waterline. On Thursday morning, the Utilities Department repaired the break so that there was no loss in water pressure to our residents or businesses. I notified Morton Salt and Rittman Local Schools Wednesday evening so that they could plan accordingly. Again, another great job by our employees.

Along with spring, come more apparent property maintenance issues. We ask our residents and businesses to keep up with their properties. I noticed today driving around that there is quite a bit of trash strewn about. I did ask Buck to work on picking up debris when they can and will continue working with Scott Ries on property maintenance but we really ask that everyone takes their part in keeping their properties clean and please remove any dilapidated structures.

Also, I saw many people riding on the bike trail today which made me smile that it is being used and that spring is really in the air.

Williams inquired what criteria we are using to know when City Hall will be opening up. Is it a County color code, a certain percentage of Covid outbreaks? Beshara responded that it is a combination of both, especially where the County is at. As far as City Hall goes more and more people are getting vaccinated which is really helpful in being able to reopen as soon as possible. Many offices across the State are closed. People are working from home. We will keep an eye open to see when it is safe to reopen. We may reopen with criteria such as two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon, so we can really keep an eye on it. Also, we have noticed we are able to get more work done when we don't have people coming

in and out all day long. They have gotten used to putting money in the drop box or sending it in the mail. I know there are some people that still like come in City Hall, but we are being very mindful. I'll keep you posted.

Carey inquired how soon Ohio Avenue would have the holes filled? Beshara responded that the has Buck looking around for pot holes. Once the asphalt plants open, he can get hot patch. Don Redinger responded that the contractors should be responsible for maintaining that until it is paved. All the other holes are our responsibility. Carey responded he was talking about Ohio. Clerk Challinor responded that it should be fixed this week.

Finance Director's Remarks

The American Rescue Plan we will receive 1.28 million. As far as we are aware right now, the schedule is we will get half of that this year and the second half next year. We are still getting information on what this can be used for. It can be used for revenue replacement by comparing 2020 revenues to 2019. As we know we ended 2020 somewhere around 4% down in income tax. We may be able to use some of this to replace that. The other significant possible use is investments in sewer and water infrastructure. Information is still coming in and I assume as with the CRF money it will be confusing the entire time.

Mayor Robertson stated that the key message to residents is that we are limited to what we can spend it on and the guidelines aren't that clear.

Williams inquired where we stand on the solar field at the water treatment plant? Beshara she would check into it. Bulp stated that there is an issue with previous financing of the waste water treatment plant. In 2016 we removed the USDA funding and turned it into a conventional loan. There is no record of the USDA mortgage being released. We are checking into this.

Council Remarks

Shows – I'm really impressed with everybody who has come out today, I'm very thankful for the extra visitors that we had. I feel that we had a very productive and good meeting. A lot of good discussions and working toward the future of our City. I want to thank Mike in helping with that watermain break last week, they cancelled school and everything and we were pretty much back up and running by one-ish. The school was very appreciative of that we had a heads up so we could be proactive to keep our kids safe. I really appreciate all the work they did in that horribly rainy day cold and nasty to get it fixed and get us back up and running. I am very proud of the work that we are doing in the City and I thank everybody for their input.

Decker – I second as well the thought that everybody tuned into probably the least entertaining episode of Parks and Rec ever. Hope you guys enjoyed it. Thanks for coming out.

Nelson – reminder that the Easter Basket giveaway is Saturday starting at 3 until we run out of baskets. Right now, we have a lot. We had an outpouring from a lot of our businesses, even our citizens. We are extremely grateful for what we have to give out on Saturday and I'm sure our children are going to be super surprised. The Easter Bunny will be there for you to see. 44 S. Main Street, Chamber of Commerce. Watch for the signs so you know where to enter and exit.

Williams – I want to thank Mike and the water department for fixing the break. I'd like to thank Chuck and Buck for the street lights that have been repaired around town, I've noticed the cavernous holes are lit now. Thank you to Pastor Crog for the prayer tonight. Thanks to the Nature Preserve volunteers that showed up the two Saturdays and also Fred Rastorfer been working feverishly on a lot of the fields down at the park. Guys like him make our town good. I really appreciate that. Thanks to the citizens who attended.

Carey – echo thanks to Mike and his guy for the great job getting that water line fixed so fast. I just wanted to say quick congratulation to Sevi Garza on his State Championship in wrestling last week and to all of our winter sports athletes for their accomplishments this

year. It's been one of those rough years with no fans or limited fans and your schedules are all thrown off from what you are used to doing. I'm just proud that they were able to get a season in and congratulations to everyone, especially Sevi.

Weirick – nothing further, thanks.

Mayor Robertson – I want to mention the Server and other organizations in town are having a free food distribution this Saturday from 10 until 12 noon. It is going to be at Milton Presbyterian Church which is located on North Street in Rittman. It includes a box of food, a half of ham, blanket, personal hygiene items and more. It is a large scale give away. If you know folks in need please direct them to pick up some food items.

a. **Approval Voucher #'s 13731 thru 13814.** Nelson moved to approve, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

b. **Motion to go into Executive Session for the Purpose of Discussion of the OPBA Union Contract and to Invite the City Manager, Law Director, Mayor and Finance Director – 8:45 p.m.** Weirick moved to approve. Shows seconded the motion, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

c. **Motion to Come out of Executive Session – 9:01 p.m.** Shows moved to approve, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

d. **Motion to Ratify OPBA Union Contract.** Nelson moved to ratify, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

Adjourn: 9:03 p.m. Carey moved to adjourn, all Yeas upon roll call and **motion carried.**

Mayor

Clerk of Council