

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of Council

Meeting

DAYTON LEGAL BLANK, INC., FORM NO. 10148

Held July 10, 2023

**Rittman City Council Met in a
PUBLIC HEARING
Monday, July 10, 2023
7:00 p.m.**

2024 Tax Budget Hearing

Bubp stated that the tax budget is legally required to be prepared and filed with the County Auditor on July 20th of every year for the following year. It is a very high-level budgeting exercise.

Bubp stated that the first thing that he wanted to highlight the projected deficit in the General Fund of \$672,994.00. Again, that is preliminary. This budget was prepared assuming the .5% levy on the ballot in November does not pass. It was also assuming that the current tax credit is not reduced. If all remains equal this is what it looks like.

Bubp also stated that at a previous meeting he was asked to run numbers on what kind drastic cuts could be performed to balance the budget without tapping into additional revenues. All of the scenarios are educated estimates given the best data available right now.

Several options were given. Examples were full closure of the police department and outsource enforcement; reduction of coverage to one officer per shift; full closure of the recreation center; closure of the pool at the recreation center; sell and end involvement in the nature preserve; reduction in snow and ice remediation, wage freeze (non-union, contract permitting), eliminate tax credit and tax increase of .5% for safety services.

Discussion was held regarding these options.

**Rittman City Council Met in a
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, July 10, 2023
7:22 p.m.**

Members Present: Dave Williams, Josh Carey, Ken Park, Amanda Nelson and Melissa Shows

Members Absent: Chuck Wyatt

Presiding: Mayor William Robertson.

The invocation was given by Dave Williams followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

a. **June 13, 2023** – Shows moved to approve, all Yeas on roll and **motion carried.**

Citizens Forum

Tina McMillen – 243 Ritter Drive – stated that after leaving the meeting last month she was concerned. If the .5% is passed the credit will still need to be removed. The Finance Director had mentioned that. There have been so many things that have happened that the trust isn't there. Even if the .5% passes what is going to stop the city from removing the credit anyway? That should also be put on the ballot so we have a choice. It should not be taken away from us. What about adding a sales tax on the stuff that we purchase in the City of Rittman? Mayor Robertson responded the city could not add an additional tax. That is at the County level. The County sets the sales tax for the entire County.

Tara Boler – 8 Fairmont – stated that maybe instead of the income tax increasing vote for a levy that can only be used for police, fire and EMS. We don't trust the general fund to be

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handled appropriately after the last 15 years. It is part of Council's job to help get businesses back in town and we are not seeing any growth. We are not seeing any growth coming in.

Bubp stated what he was intending to get across, the idea is that we are trying really hard to get back to the tax structure as it existed before the error was found. Before the error was found since 2012, we have had a rate of 1.5% and a credit of 1%. As far as I am concerned that is the goal is to get to that, which is the same as it was at that time. Not necessarily to eliminate it entirely and of course that would be a decision that would not be made by me. The income tax levy that is on the ballot for November is specifically to go to a what would be a new fund that is designated only for the use of fire, EMS and police. This would not be going to the general fund. What it does help accomplish as I said and what I meant was that it could alleviate some pressure off of the general fund. The money that would be coming in would be going directly and only to the safety services.

Mark McMillen – 243 Ritter Drive – stated the last Council meeting was enlightening. I think the letter that was sent out in January when it said that the mistake was found in August or September. I don't think there would have been an issue getting the tax voted on if the error was reported sooner. Honesty and transparency go a long way. Politics are dirty and corrupt especially at a local level. So being more transparent will really help this situation. Why weren't the citizens made aware of the situation before they were? A comment was made by Bobbie that she is not a resident of Rittman. She feels that she is part of the town. I guess my question is why the City Manger is not a resident of Rittman? When you are a citizen of the town you are held a lot more accountable to your decisions and your actions. I guess there is a reason why the City Manger doesn't have to be a resident, I am just wondering what that reason was. Mayor Robertson responded the State passed a law a number of years ago that Municipalities are not allowed to force any employees to live within the boundaries of the district. At one time everybody had to live in the City; that got to be an economic issue. We are not allowed to force that to happen. City Council members must be residents of Rittman.

Old Business

a. **Res. No. 8359 A Resolution of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties, and State of Ohio, Amending the Provisions of the Municipal Income Tax Ordinance to Provide for a Permanent Increase in the Amount of One-Half Percent (.5%) in the Income Tax Rate Effective January 1, 2024, for the Purposes of Funding the Safety Services of the City of Rittman and Declaring an Emergency. Third Reading.** Res. No. 8359 was read on third reading, Shows moved to amended Res. No. 8359 to reflect that the .5% increase in the income tax rate will go to the Safety Services of Rittman. All Yeas on roll call and **motion carried**. Nelson moved to adopt as amended, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried**.

b. **Ord. No. 8360 An Ordinance of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, Amending the Provisions of the Municipal Income Tax Ordinance to Provide for a Permanent Increase in the Amount of One-Half Percent (.5%) in the Income Tax Rate Effective January 1, 2024 for the Purposes of the Operation of Safety Services of the City of Rittman to be Allocated to a Safety Services Fund and Declaring an Emergency. Third Reading.** Ord. No. 8360 was read on third reading. Nelson moved to adopt, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried**.

c. **Res. No. 8363 A Resolution of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, Determining that 3.033 Acre Parcel of Land on Ritter Drive Owned by the City of Rittman is no Longer Needed for Municipal Purposes and Authorizing the Municipal Manager to Solicit Bids for its Sale as Required by Law and Declaring an Emergency. Third Reading.** Res. No. 8363 was read on third reading. Shows moved to adopt. Williams inquired if there would be a reserve. Beshara responded that she was still working with the appraiser on the value of the property. Beshara also stated she would let Council know what the reserve would be. All Yeas on roll call and **motion carried**.

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New Business

a. **Motion to Approve the 2024 Tax Budget.** Carey so moved, all Yeas on roll call and motion carried.

b. **Res. No. 8364 A Resolution of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, Certifying that when a Municipal Obligation was Incurred Sums were Lawfully Appropriated in the Funds to Satisfy the Obligation and Sufficient Sums Currently Exist to Satisfy this Obligation According to the Attached Sheet(s) and Declaring an Emergency. Three Readings.** Res. No. 8364 was read on first reading. Shows moved to suspend the rules and have second and third reading, all Yeas on roll call and motion carried. Williams moved to adopt, all Yeas on roll call and motion carried.

City Managers Remarks

I wanted to read something. This weekend we had the Fire in the Sky Tournament we hosted some of the fields. Thank you to Garrick and Moose for making sure the baseball fields were in pristine condition for the Orrville Firefighters Fire in the Sky 14-year girls ASA Tournament. They used our fields Thursday through Saturday. They went up on Friday and was introduced to Councilmember Kyle Shankland of Orrville who was extremely thankful to us they did in prepping the fields. Also, a big thank you to Jesse and Jen Cottrell of the Rittman Fire Department for the basic field prep and watering down the fields in between games. And to the RYBS for manning the concession stand. It was really great to see so many people here in Rittman and they were just thrilled. I don't know if you got to go to any of the games but please so. They were amazing. Also, Sterling Road is really near being resurfaced. Morning Star and Shondel are getting chip and seal on them because they desperately need it and there were Permissive Tax Dollars available for this. We also need to do more asphalt work; some of the alleys will be done. We are going to be working on them as much as we can this summer. But the Permissive Tax Dollars only go so far. When we run out of those funds, we run out. We are really working hard to help maintain all of that. Also, we had a lot of complaints about the fireworks. Between Chief Shows' office and mine and Joan taking calls, there were a lot of reasons that people were upset. People were not respecting the time which was from 4:00 to 11:00 p.m., July 3, 4, and 5th. They were starting the weekend before and probably went into this weekend. The noise, the paper pollution is still out there. If you go down some streets you will see where there are streamers and paper and people didn't up clean up after themselves. There were people who had disregard for safety and were inconsiderate of others. Also, in one area where there was a cul-de-sac, they decided to have a block party and they decided to set off fireworks in the cul-de-sac. That took about an hour of police's time to calm all of that down. I just wanted to give a report on fireworks, if you want any more information on it, Bob can have it ready for the next meeting. I just wanted to let you know that there were several complaints this year.

Finance Director Remarks

I just wanted to touch on a couple of things tonight. I'm sure some may have noticed that the June Financials were not on the Agenda for this meeting. We did successfully move over to our new software system and it is a learning curve but it's going well. Part of that conversion is working with SSI to figure out where the reconciliation process crosses over, where it is the same, where it needs to change. We are still working with them to make sure we are properly reconciling and closing our books each month. That will be on the next meeting which will be August 14. I've also started speaking with representatives from AFLAC. They are looking into hopefully starting a relationship with us for any employees who are interested in it. The good part is that there is no cost to the City. It's a voluntary thing it would be up to each individual employee. In the meantime, they want to build a HR and benefits platform so that everything is compliant.

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Council Remarks

Nelson – thank you everyone who came to the Chamber’s Night at the Races. It was a good turnout and a lot of the funds will be going to the Sleepwalker Festival coming up on the 27th and 28th of this month. The City is doing a table out front to sell raffle tickets for a Blackstone Grill and those funds will go into the Chamber’s Fireworks Fund. Thank you, Matt, for getting all of the information compiled. It is a lot to take in.

Park – thanks Matt I appreciate that information. It helps us get the pictures that we need and make the decisions as we are going forward. Always appreciate the effort and the explanations that go along with it. Folks in the audience, thanks for coming. Some of the comments about being transparent, I think we try do that as much as we can. Matt’s statement about cutting the credit after we get the tax increase. I think Matt’s just telling us what our options are. Matt’s not telling us what we need to do, how we should do it. I can’t guarantee what I am going to vote on that in November until I get to November. There is a lot of time between now and then and a lot of comments are going to come in and that kind of stuff. For me to sit here and tell you I guarantee I am not going to vote for it, I’m probably not going to vote for it for the credit to be taken away, but that could change ten times between now and November for various reasons. That’s just me being transparent about it. I am not trying to be smart or anything like that. I appreciate your comments as they help me make decisions up here, I don’t know how else to say it, then that.

Williams – thanks Matt for preparing everything. It is a lot to think about as Amanda said. Thanks to Bobbie and her work regarding Sterling and Erie; my car will thank you for that as well. I want to thank the Chiefs and the Directors and the Admin as there is a certain moral that we have to keep up and when people see budget cuts it is easy to jump ship and to keep people boosted up in thin times is a lot of work. I just want you to know it doesn’t go unnoticed. So, thanks everybody.

Carey – thank everyone for coming out. Thank you for voicing your concerns and comments. Thank you, Matt Bulp, for your work on the budget. Nobody wants to see any of those scenarios occur, but it is important to see the numbers and how many of those numbers need to add up to \$700,000.00. There is a lot different things that we need to be taking into consideration. Little things do add up but I don’t know that there are enough little things that are going to add up to \$700,000.00. Something is probably going to have to be cut or maybe two things if this doesn’t go through. Thank you for your hard work on that.

Shows – I echo everybody else’s comments. Thanks, Matt for your hard work. Thanks for conversations last week we where we talked about this and your willingness to answer questions as they come up, I do greatly appreciate that. I know none of this was easy to prepare. I don’t think the Directors were toughing it out so they know none of this is easy to hear of what might happen to their departments. It’s scary. I don’t want to see any of the cuts as far as our Safety Services. The thought of going over to County for Sheriff and leaving our citizens unprotected is very scary. We also had a loss in the community this week. I’m sure everybody is aware Miss Nolt from Rittman Elementary passed away after over 30 years of service at the elementary school. She was laid to rest today. She impacted a lot of kids over the years. I just want to reach out to Chief Sweigert and his team, I know that they did everything that they could. I know it was not an easy call for them. I do appreciate their efforts and the fact that we have them here is so important. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Nolt family.

Adjourn: 7:53 p.m. Park moved to adjourn, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**



Mayor



Clerk of Council