

CITY OF ROCKY RIVER

January 6, 2025

The Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting of Council was called to order by Mr. Furry, President of Council, at 7:00 p.m. in the David J. Cook Council Chambers.

Council Members Present: Mr. Hunt, Mrs. Gallagher, Mr. O'Boyle, Mr. Shipp,
Mrs. Morris, Mr. Sindelar, Mr. Furry

Administration: Mayor Bobst, Mr. Snyder

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

The Mayor reported that the Rocky River Resident Reference Guide for 2025 has been completed. The photograph on the cover is the large tree at Rocky River Park. It has been photo manipulated by artist Ken Long, a resident of Rocky River who currently has an exhibit at the MetroParks Rocky River Nature Center. The administration thanks Mr. Long for the opportunity to use his photograph. This edition has great information on the Senior Center, an article about the storm and what the city would like residents to do in terms of keeping in touch with the administration and new employees or employees in new positions. The restaurant guide and the city map are also included. This publication should be received by residents and businesses next week. A big thank you to Cleveland Magazine. The Mayor said that the city used to do this publication in house but it took a lot of time. This publication does not cost the city anything as it is supported by the advertising dollars of the local businesses. Thank you to the businesses for supporting this and Cleveland Magazine for writing it for the city. As always, thank you to Mary Ellen Umerley, who is the Editor in Chief of the entire Reference Guide publication. Mary Ellen takes this on as her personal project every year.

The Mayor received notification from several Council members regarding an accolade and recognition received last week from "Travel and Leisure" which was picked up by Cleveland.com naming the City of Rocky River as one of the best U.S. retirement destinations for livability. The article explained why you should consider moving to Rocky River. The City of Rocky River was #2 and the #1 town is in New Jersey and scored the same number of points as Rocky River. They discussed several things that make Rocky River a wonderful place to live. This is something the city can enjoy and celebrate and the Mayor has heard from many residents who were thrilled that the city was recognized.

The Mayor said that Kathryn Kerber, the Planning and Community Development Director, has received recent certifications. She is now a certified member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. The letter AICP are the letters following her name regarding this recognition. This indicates a body of work that Kathryn dedicated herself to and now has received that credential.

The Mayor shared that the city has recently hired an individual, Dylan Minek, who will serve the Boards and Commissions along with Kathryn Kerber and Building Commissioner Ray Reich. Dylan starts next week. Dylan is working on his master's in urban planning and development. He is knowledgeable in GIS and Planning Law which are areas where the city needs individuals. He has great credentials and is an excellent student. He completed an interesting project where he compared Cleveland to Minneapolis St. Paul.

The Mayor said that the city has received a lot of questions regarding property taxes as final valuations are being received. The property tax bills have not been sent out yet. If anyone has questions, please contact the Cuyahoga County Treasurer's Office.

The Mayor said the Annual Report process of the city has begun and is due to the Mayor by the end of January. City Council will receive a complete document of all the annual reports after they are reviewed and collated. One interesting statistic to note is that the Fire Department had 4,129 runs in 2024 as compared to almost 3,800 runs in 2023. The Mayor heard good news today that the new fire truck ordered may be delivered sometime in 2025 but they do not have a date for the new squad vehicle.

The Mayor announced that the County initiated a program where all municipalities throughout the county could transition from their current email address to [.gov](mailto:rockyriverohio.gov) at no cost to the city. The County has put everything together and the City of Rocky River will be rockyriverohio.gov. This transition will be live in a couple of months. All employee email addresses will automatically go to the [.gov](mailto:rockyriverohio.gov) address for approximately a year once initiated. The Mayor said this was a great County project and thanked the County for taking the lead for all the communities.

The Mayor announced that former Police Chief Don Wagner has passed away. The Mayor said that Chief Wagner provided good solid guidance as it related to law enforcement and really built the police department foundationally to what the city sees today. Chief Wagner's son, Lieutenant David Wagner is the Executive Staff Assistant to Chief Lichman. The Mayor does not have details of the funeral arrangements yet but wanted City Council to know. The administration extends to David and the rest of the family the city's condolences. Chief Wagner was a great, great man.

The Mayor also announced that Mr. Byron Spooner passed away. Mr. Spooner was a great man, a big baseball fan and played on men's softball for years, a golfer, a member at Westwood Country Club and was well known working at Zeis McGreevey Funeral Home. He loved the City of Rocky River and was involved in many civic organizations and the Greek Church. The administration says goodbye to him and sends condolences to his family.

- President Furry said if you had met Byron, he touched you in some type of way. Mr. Furry said he can't tell us how many times he probably shot his age golfing and did not leave much on the runway. The Mayor said he touched many people and the love that surrounded him and his family.
- In regard to the County email change, Mr. Sindelar asked what happens if there is a Public Record Request. Will the County have the city's data or will they be in control. The Mayor said no that the County secured the rockyriverohio.gov as an administrative function. The County will not have anything to do with the city's data.
- Mrs. Gallagher asked when the Heritage Home Program information will be sent out. The Mayor is meeting with Kathryn Kerber to discuss edits in the first letter. Once the edits are complete, the letter will be sent out by the Cleveland Restoration Society. A public meeting will follow. If there is anyone interested in the Heritage Home Program, they can contact Kathryn and begin the process.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: NONE

COMMUNICATIONS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS: President Furry said that City Council should have received the Ethics Disclosure Form that every elected office in 2024 and 2025 needs to complete.

Council Clerk Pease emailed City Council with the information.

President Furry recognized Alumni Councilman O'Donnell and former President Moran of City Council in the audience tonight along with the media.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Amended Ordinance No. 99-24: Mr. Sindelar said this has been discussed for several weeks and has been laid out clearly and addressed all questions. Council received the official legal description. This is regarding a plot of land at the corner of Woodside and Morewood Parkway that the property owners have asked to purchase. As stated in the property description, the city is selling a piece of property to them so they can put up a fence. The city did its due diligence, addressed any legal concerns as far as restrictions and public bidding and the major difference is that it is abutting property. It is being sold at fair market value and the description was done by MacKay Engineering. There is no negative history in the title chain. Mr. Sindelar will seek passage at the next Legislative meeting.

Ordinance No. 100-24: Mr. Hunt said this is the annual agreement with the state to receive grant funds for the operation of the Marine Patrol. Mr. Hunt received a memo from Director Snyder with an outline of how the grant works that he forward to City Council. The city has been receiving these funds for as long as Mr. Hunt has been on Council from the state for a portion of the operation of the Marine Patrol. This will be an authorization to accept the grant up to \$35,000 for the operation of the Marine Patrol which operates between Memorial Day and Labor Day. This will be read for the second time next week.

Ordinance No. 101-24: Mr. Furry said this authorizes the awarding of the city's Audit Services and will cover the fiscal periods 2024 to 2028. The vetting process is prescribed by the Auditor of State Keith Faber and is being awarded to the incumbent firm who just finished their five-year contract. Although this is for an additional five years, according to the criteria Auditor of State, the city cannot contract with a private firm for more than ten consecutive years. Four firms were vetted and scored by Auditor of State and Zupka & Associates scored the highest. They were not the least costly but conversely not the highest. The city has latitude for lowest and best especially regarding professional services. Mr. Furry is expecting three reads on this.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS: NONE

The next meeting will be a Legislative Meeting on Monday, January 13, 2025, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

David W. Furry
President of Council

Susan G. Pease
Clerk of Council