



Ravenna City Council
Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes
July 13th, 2020

The public meeting was held via Zoom and live streamed via YouTube. A video recording of the meeting can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fLvZLQIdCs>

Council present via Zoom: Council President Andrew Kluge, Amy Michael, Rob Kairis, Paul Moskun, Cheryl Wood, Tim Calfee, Christina West, and Matt Harper.

Also attending the meeting via Zoom: Mayor Frank Seman; Police Chief, Jeff Wallis; Law Director, Frank Cimino; Finance Director, Brian Huff; Assistant City Engineer, Patrick Jeffers; Service Director, Kay Dubinsky; Utility Billing Supervisor, Mike Reynolds; Coleman Outreach Coordinator, Erin Lemmon; Coleman Access Office Director, Michelle Furbee; Kevin Skilton and Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor

The Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M. by Chairperson, Amy Michael.

The first discussion item was downtown outreach with guest speakers Erin Lemmon and Michelle Furbee from Coleman Professional Services.

Ms. Lemmon introduced herself, she is a Case Manager and serves as the Ravenna Downtown Outreach Coordinator for 10 ½ hours per week. Prior to the pandemic she was downtown at least three days a week, working with anyone in need of services in the downtown area. She would visit the Caritas Café in the mornings and the Center of Hope at lunchtime to talk to individuals in need of such assistance as housing, social services, or a free government phone. Her schedule has shifted due to the pandemic, but she still finds time to outreach people in the mornings and afternoons. Ms. Lemmon gave her work phone number to Council, 330-931-0970, and will be giving the Council Clerk business cards to help share the information for people to receive assistance.

Ms. Michael stated her concern that since places have had to close, people are having issues with finding safe places to feel welcomed, charge their phones, go to the bathroom, and take a shower. She spoke about finding solutions and communication which is important to finding resources for helping people. She stated that there was a cooling center discussed to open up to individuals on hot days at the Senior Center on Oakwood, adding that if anyone needs shower or laundry services they can call Family Community Services, press 0, and talk to Trisha to schedule the opportunity to do so.

Ms. Michael asked Ms. Lemmon about her clientele and if she knew where they were coming from and how they were coming to Ravenna or Portage County. She added that the Sherriff's department is dropping off discharged people which she thinks is inhumane and a safety issue. Ms. Lemmon stated that Ravenna is the County Seat which offers services that people in need

rely on. She said that most clients are traditionally from the area but sometimes includes those that have been released from jail or are no longer able to stay with someone.

Mr. Kluge asked if there were any resources that can be given to people that are seen in the downtown area that need help, such as pamphlets. Ms. Lemmon said the best thing would be to give them her card that has her number on it and she will be able to respond personally on a case by case basis.

Ms. Michael stated her concern with garbage cans overflowing and cigarette butts on the ground with the influx of homeless people but did say that she had help cleaning up the area and bought lunch for a gentleman in return for his help.

Ms. Furbee introduced herself as the Director of the Access Office who runs the emergency services office where they evaluate people for treatment. She acknowledged that there are some concerns that people who are homeless downtown might have some mental health concerns, and stated that with pink slips they are able to force involuntary treatment on people and where those boundaries are. She said that care depends upon cooperation. If they are cooperative then they can be evaluated at their office, but if someone is on drugs or alcohol then they would have to be admitted to the ER for evaluation.

Ms. West thanked Ms. Lemmon and Ms. Furbee for coming to talk to Council.

Ms. Michael and Ms. Lemmon discussed communication and emails that can give updates regarding the downtown outreach.

Ms. Wood requested from Ms. Lemmon to inform Council when the PIT and HIC counts are being done in January so that they can help volunteer.

The second item was to accept an anonymous donation for the Police Department.

Chief Wallis stated that he spoke to Mr. Huff and the donation was for \$2,500.00 from an anonymous donor. He stated that the money is open to be spent however they see fit. There were a couple ideas which included putting a light on the flagpole at the Police Dept. and a memorial stone for Jim Wert who was a Police officer killed 40 years ago this coming January.

- The item was moved forward

The third item was to accept an anonymous donation for the Fire Department.

There was no discussion. Mr. Kairis asked if the donations were from the same donor and Ms. Michael said, yes.

- The item was moved forward

The fourth item was to accept \$3,588.78 from the Ohio Department of Public Safety for an EMS Grant.

Mr. Kluge stated that it is a yearly grant that the Fire Department receives.

The Mayor stated that there is no match required to receive the grant and that it is for equipment and training.

- The item was moved forward

The fifth item was to discuss all-purpose vehicles within city limits.

Ms. Michael looked at some ordinances from other municipalities concerning all-purpose vehicles. She recited the verbiage from an ordinance which read “off-road vehicles and noise emanating therefore is causing a danger to health and safety and welfare of the residents of this community”. She stated that other residents have stepped forward and other phone calls were received regarding the all-purpose vehicles being driven within the city limits. She feels that something should be in place to protect the neighborhoods from the sounds, smells, and dust, and that they are not meant to be a city vehicle.

Mr. Kluge stated that separate from the private property issue, the big concern is hearing complaints about the vehicles being driven on the roads and the sidewalks.

Mr. Kairis stated that there is an ordinance concerning noise level, but the issue is how to enforce it, and said that he would be interested in an ordinance that strictly prohibits the use of the vehicles within the City limits.

Mr. Kluge asked Chief Wallis to talk on the subject and asked when people should call dispatch to report the all-purpose vehicle issues. Ms. Michael added by asking if there was anything that could be done when they are on the road.

Chief Wallis stated that in Codified section 446 it outlines what is not allowed on the roadway and stated that people should call. The problem is that sometimes the vehicle is already gone by the time someone responds, but they have given warnings and written tickets for it in the past. There has been noted complaints from activity on Lawrence St., Sunny Wood, and the access road near the railroad tracks.

Ms. Michael asked Chief Wallis if he felt the ordinance on the books was enough. He stated that if Council is looking to ban the vehicles then the ordinance needs to be changed, but if they are looking for enforcement of section 446, then that can be done with phone calls and their observation.

Mr. Kluge stated that the issue arises every summer, with Chief Wallis adding that snowmobiles become an issue in the winter, along with dirt bikes and four-wheelers.

Mr. Kairis stated his concern for the vehicles and lack of resolution, with Mr. Kluge adding that talking about it is the first step towards possible change, with Chief Wallis’ approval to call in complaints.

Chief Wallis suggested seeing how the next few months go and they will track the complaints and discuss it at the next Committee meeting.

The Mayor had a management update stating that the Fire Department is continually sanitizing their building and vehicles, and have increased their transports of people with the coronavirus. He said that as of yesterday Portage County moved up to the Level 2 rating and would like to encourage people to use a mask, be careful and observe distance. The Governor has set up a color index rating Counties by risk for coronavirus, Portage County was yellow but has now turned to orange.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:21 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

**Amy Michael, Chairperson
Public Health and Safety Committee**