



**RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
October 18, 2021, at 7:00pm**

The public meeting was held in person and live streamed via YouTube. A video recording of the meeting can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGO5eVSX9pw>

The Committee of the Whole Meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Council President, Andrew Kluge.

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

Also attending the meeting: Mayor Seman; Acting Fire Chief, Mark Chapple; Finance Director, Brian Huff; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Service Director, Kay Dubinsky, Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor, Larry Silenius, Cliff Soudil, Nick Dudek, Alan Balog, Karen Balog, Tom Halay, Bill Barber and Diane Smith

The first item on the agenda was to approve the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes from September 20, 2021.

- Motion to approve the September 20, 2021, Committee of the Whole minutes by Ms. Michael, 2nd by Mr. Kairis- **All Ayes**

The second item was an ordinance to accept the Ohio EMS grant in the sum of \$3,628.63. Ms. Michael stated that the item had been talked about and it is accepting the money, adding that there is no match required.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The third item was an ordinance to authorize the Mayor to apply for the 2021 ACAR Placemaking grant.

Ms. Michael stated that the item is giving permission to the Fire Department to apply for the grant, adding that there is no match required.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The fourth item was approval to pave South Freedom St. and add it to the 2022 paving schedule.

Mr. Harper stated that the item is to approve the paving of South Freedom St. to then add it to the 2022 paving schedule, but first he stated that there were residents in the audience who wished to address the topic.

Ms. Michael stated that she went to each house on South Freedom St. to speak to the residents and all but one resident was in favor of keeping the brick road. They stated vehicle speed, young children, and historical value reasons for wanting to keep the road brick. She added that some residents did not receive the survey that was sent out, and those that did submit their opinion were not able to make the meeting but will be watching from home.

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Ms. Wood stated that she also heard from concerned residents who wanted to keep the brick road and suggested reusing the salvageable bricks from South Freedom St. and taking bricks from Sycamore St. to repave South Freedom St. and then repaving Sycamore St. with asphalt.

Mr. Finney expressed a concern that he does not know what shape the bricks will be in once they are removed but said that the brick road could be put back with new brick.

Mr. Alan Balog introduced himself to Council as having lived on the corner of Spruce St. and South Freedom for 20 years and circulated a petition in the 1970's to restore the South Freedom St. with brick. He stated that once the history is covered up, it's lost, and people forget about it. He asked what the City wants Ravenna to look like in 20-50 years, and added that he has fixed up two buildings that he owns so that they look better for future generations. He told Council that it was their decision and that they are entrusted with the responsibility of how Ravenna will be years from now.

Ms. Karen Balog introduced herself and stated that it was in the late 1970's that the City did repairs to South Freedom St. and it is in worse shape now than it was back then. She stated that when they picked the bricks up it was dirt underneath, but before then placed them down again they put a layer of concrete. She expressed that in towns she has visited, with historic districts, they take pride in maintaining their brick streets and that they add character and charm to the town. Ms. Balog stated that she thinks the City should repair the street with brick and that it makes a difference to the residents, for historical purposes and as a way to detour speeding.

Mr. Tom Haley introduced himself and stated that his parents bought the house that he currently lives in on South Freedom St. in 1940 and he has been there all but 8 years of his life. He said that he would be very upset to see the brick go and that it is very much a part of who he is. Mr. Haley said that in the 1980's he also had a petition signed to keep the street brick after a water line project threatened the permanence of the brick, adding that the same people then wanted it to stay brick just like they do today. He stated that although the cost is approximately \$100,000 more, the long-term savings in repairs would be money well spent. Mr. Haley expressed the sentiment of thinking about future generations and said that the brick street would be a good place to start because it would elevate the financial burden of constantly relaying new asphalt. He stated that it is important from a historical point of view that the City is going to be serious about maintaining the architectural value of its community and having pride in the street's historical significance.

Mr. Kluge stated that since the project is such an important one, there needs to be enough time to allocate the funds by January and find a company to come in and do the project.

Mr. Finney stated that it is the first time in his 21 years with the City that South Freedom St. paving is being discussed and he is just trying to help Council to make a decision. He said that he had started to put money aside and that a concern of his is that \$300,000-\$350,000 might not be enough, adding that if the final decision is brick, then the project may need to be done in phases over a couple years.

Mr. Nick Dudek introduced himself as a resident of North Prospect St. and showed Council a brick that had been discarded when the street was redone. He stated that he watched the company put down the new layer of brick over concrete and expressed that it should last another 50 years without any maintenance. He said that he thinks that between salvaging old bricks, and buying new bricks the project could be done, adding that a 20-year bond may be worth considering to pay for the repaving of bricks. Mr. Dudek recommended to bring the item back to Committee and stated that he would volunteer his time to give ideas and comment what he observed on the North Prospect Street brick repaving project.

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Mr. Finney stated that the City will have to consider curbing and aprons for the paving project and assess South Freedom Street.

Mr. Harper stated that at the last Committee meeting they moved forward with Option B, and he wanted to clarify that the Committee will now be moving forward with Option A.

Mr. Finney stated that with the aprons and the curbing, the \$332,000 price might be a low estimate.

Council and Mr. Finney will do more research on the project and Council decided to put the item back into Committee for further discussion.

- Motion to put the item back in committee by Matt Harper, 2nd by Cheryl Wood- **All Ayes**

The fifth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to submit an application for OPWC funding for the State Route 14 water tank project.

Mr. Moskun stated that the application is to receive funds to have a new water tank built in a different location. The new location is undetermined.

Mr. Kluge stated that it is an important infrastructure project.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The sixth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to submit an application for OPWC funding for the Page and Scranton Street Water Line Project.

Mr. Moskun stated that the item is for the water line replacement on Page St., and a portion of Scranton St. between Mechanic and Main St. The project would be for the year 2022 and would include the replacement of all the fire hydrants along the water line project.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The seventh item was an ordinance to appropriate \$7,000 into the water line survey account for Pratt St.

Mr. Moskun stated that the money is to go towards paying to have Pratt St. surveyed for a water line project in 2022.

Mr. Finney stated that the project is the preliminarily awarded critical infrastructure grant. He estimates that 75% of the project cost will be paid for by the grant.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The eighth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to sign an agreement between Portage County Solid Waste and the City for recycling services.

Mr. Moskun stated that the item is to continue with the city's recycling services.

Mr. Kairis stated that there was some conversation with the Law Director regarding the contract.

Mr. Kairis is hoping to get some points clarified in the contract. He questioned if the contract rolls over each year after the initial 18 months, or if another contract renewal is needed.

Ms. Dubinsky stated that the contract would keep renewing unless the City wanted to leave the contract.

Mr. Kairis stated that he would still like the contract to clarify that intention.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

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The ninth item was a resolution of support for the Ravenna Downtown District Plan.

Mr. Kairis stated that the week prior, Council heard from various constituents who were in favor of the Downtown District Plan that was developed by the consultant Jason Kentner and commissioned by Main Street Ravenna. He stated that he and Bill Barber put together a resolution and they are looking for a stamp of approval from Council regarding the wording.

Mr. Kluge addressed some concerns regarding the actualization of the projects and clarified that infrastructure money could not be used on any of the proposed and conceptual projects.

Council members expressed concern regarding the wording in the resolution that stated, “endorse and adopt” and were more comfortable with either “endorse” or “support”, adding that they would not be comfortable adopting the plan.

Mr. Barber emphasized that the plan is a framework of where Ravenna could be in the future and to get an idea of how the city could develop. He stated that he has spoken with the Chamber to help clarify things and answer their questions.

Council discussed the verbiage of support, endorse, and adopt, and what that would mean in relation to the document and how those words would be perceived. They stated that they cannot adopt a plan that forces entities to do something, but that they can support the plan. It was discussed that “support” might not be a strong enough word verses “adopt”. Council members appreciated the ideas in the plan but were uncomfortable adopting the plan.

Mr. Barber expressed the desire to get the City’s stamp of approval in the form of a resolution stating that the plan could help in receiving infrastructure money or getting interest from entrepreneurs who would be willing to invest money towards a project.

Mr. Kairis asked Council members for feedback on the wording. Mr. Calfee and Mr. Moskun were in favor of “support” and Ms. West was in favor of “endorse”.

Mr. Kairis stated to clarify that Council was amenable to removing the word “adopted” in the resolution title and after “Therefore it be resolved, and to only use “endorse”. He added that he will change “may never be implemented” to “will never be implemented” in the sixth whereas.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The tenth item was an ordinance authorizing the approval of a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) for 228 South Sycamore Street.

Ms. Wood stated that the State of Ohio has approved the expansion for the current CRA, and the item is for the redevelopment of 228 South Sycamore St. They have an estimated amount of \$11 million dollars in renovations and are asking for 100 percent tax abatement for 12 years.

Approximately \$8.5 million of the \$11 million will be available for the tax abatement. The property will be mixed use with retail, commercial and loft condos for sale.

Mayor Seman stated that the property owner also renovated the old Evenflo building which is now going to be Children’s Advantage. He said that the owner invests his money, renovates, and then turns the property over.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The eleventh item was an ordinance to appropriate funds not to exceed \$3,000 for Full Spectrum Media to create a community survey for the City of Ravenna.

Ms. West stated that the idea came from the Health and Safety Committee. They considered creating a safety survey, but they eventually decided that it would be more beneficial to do a community survey. It is a way to get feedback on things that the city needs to improve and on

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things that the city is doing. Ms. West stated that she will reach out to department heads to get feedback regarding the survey.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

There being no further business before Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Council President