

**CITY OF MASON
COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 24, 2014**

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m. Rabbi Yosef Kalmanson opened the meeting in prayer. Jack Stevens led all those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDANCE

The following members of Council were present: Victor Kidd, Barbara Spaeth, Rich Cox, Tom Grossmann, Charlene Pelfrey, Don Prince, and David Nichols.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the February 10, 2014 2014 Council Meeting Minutes was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Spaeth. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to approve the February 13, 2014 2014 Council Work Session Minutes was made by Councilmember Cox, seconded by Vice Mayor Kidd. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mason Police Department will conduct the 13th *Citizens Police Academy* starting on March 26. The program runs for 10 weeks and covers various topics. Past alumni of the program have assisted the City with speed surveys, festivals, and interview panels.

The Community Center this year will again host *The Race to Anyplace* event on March 12 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This is the fourth year the Center will partner with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society for this event. Teams of 12 register and pay a fee to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society to participate and all proceeds go towards research to cure blood cancers. Over the course of the day, over 600 participants and those watching the event are expected to visit the center.

In addition to the City of Mason's designation as the 7th Best Place to Live by *Money Magazine*, the City has also been recognized by *NerdWallet* as one of the Best Cities in Ohio for Job Seekers and one of the Best Towns in Ohio for Young Families. *Safewise* has named Mason as the one of the Safest Cities in Ohio and *SeniorCitizen.travel* posted an article entitled "Why Seniors Should Travel to Ohio."

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilmember Spaeth gave a summary of the February 13 Park Board meeting which included discussion on the Water Moccasins summer swim program coaching staff, Community Center events/programs, Bicentennial Baseball Tournament, and delay of backstop fencing replacement at Corwin Nixon Park. She stated that baseball field scheduling is complete and park maintenance staff continues to assist with snow removal.

Councilmember Prince stated that Festivals of Mason have met twice since the last Council meeting. They are working on the 2014 Heritage Festival and are actively seeking volunteers.

RECOGNITION OF JOHN BURKE OF WARREN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Commander Burke stated that the Task Force has expanded to almost 30 employees with a 49% increase in cases. He discussed the type of cases they investigate and said that over the past year heroin deaths have increased by 50% and that prescription drug seizures are up by 800%. Commander Burke thanked the City for financial contribution to the Drug Task Force. Commander Burke discussed with Council the importance of drug prevention programs, such as D.A.R.E., and what citizens and legislators can do to help. He said that any information concerning suspected drug activity can be entered confidentially on their website.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mayor Nichols introduced Jack Stevens, an 8th grade student at Mason Middle School. Jack is a straight-A student and has played violin in the school program for two years. The Mayor said that Jack is a future leader that he met at a D.A.R.E program.

ORDINANCE 2014-09 ACCEPTING THE DESIGN BID FOR THE KINGS MILLS ROAD BRIDGE OVER I-71 DECORATIVE FENCING FROM STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$38,410, AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE CONTRACT DOCUMENTS

A motion to read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

Eric Hansen stated that Council discussed and tabled this ordinance two weeks ago. The bridge deco design was also discussed at a Council Work Session. He explained that the ordinance is for a design contract that will help finalize engineering design specifications for a decorative fence that is proposed to be installed on the Kings Mills Road overpass at I-71. The Bicentennial Committee has been working on this for several months and presented initial concepts last year. Approval of this ordinance will allow the project to move forward with final design and to stay on schedule for the work to be complete for the Bicentennial year.

Councilmember Pelfrey shared Bicentennial Committee thoughts concerning this project. She said that the intention and importance of branding provides investment that may be realized through future growth. Mason hosts national and international guests that often identify the Mason area as “Cincinnati.” She shared photos of the signage from the I-71 corridor which does little to identify this major city gateway as “Mason.” Kings Island has 3 million visitors/year and approximately 90,000 people pass under Kings Mills Road every day, with 30 million traveling under the bridge in a year. She said that the committee feels current signage in this area is inadequate for these types and number of guests. Councilmember Pelfrey stated that the City of Mason spent \$350,000 on plantings last year. Mason has done an extremely successful job branding Mason as a quality community for business and residential. She said that the City

has two bridges that are currently not being utilized to identify our City. Unlike plantings, this tool lasts for generations, is low maintenance, and is visible yearlong to the 30 million people passing under it. It is important to note that proposed additions to the bridge can be safely removed and reinstalled. Councilmember Pelfrey stated that the Bicentennial Committee considers this bridge deco project a key element to the Bicentennial that will benefit the City today and generations in the future.

During Council discussion, Vice Mayor Kidd voiced his concerns regarding the cost of the project and questioned if there would be enough return on investment to justify this cost. He expressed his support to identify this entrance as the City of Mason but wondered if alternate signage such as the “Welcome to Ohio” signs might be more cost effective. Councilmembers Prince and Cox said that the cost of the support structure alone for a billboard sign such as the type suggested by Vice Mayor Kidd is expensive. Councilmember Grossmann stated that he objects to the ultimate cost of this project, believes that the money could be spent more wisely, and that the project would not accomplish its objectives. Councilmember Grossmann and Vice Mayor Kidd discussed reasons the City of Mason is sometimes identified as “Cincinnati” could be that Cincinnati is the largest city in the region and something that most outsiders recognize. Councilmember Cox stated that spending a half million dollars to plaster your name 24-7 is marketing genius and it will work. He stated that this project will help outsiders identify the area as “Mason” and that an outside group working several years ago on Downtown Mason expressed the need for more outside branding of Mason. Councilmember Spaeth stated that the project would make our city stand out, people do notice interstate bridge decorations, and this ordinance is to design and determine the cost of construction. Councilmember Prince stated that he supports this ordinance for the design and that he notices these types of signs, believes they help market cities, but has some concerns regarding the cost. Councilmember Pelfrey replied to Mayor Nichols that the committee has been working on the bridge deco concept for close to two years and that there was no negative feedback when presented to Council at the October and November 2013 meetings.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-09 was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Spaeth. VOTE: 5 YEAS, 2 NAYS (Kidd, Grossmann)

ORDINANCE 2014-10 AUTHORIZING A CONTRIBUTION OF \$22,016 TO THE WARREN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

A motion to read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

Jennifer Heft stated that the City has participated in the Warren County Drug Task Force since its inception. Early contributions from the City were about \$5000 annually and in 2000 the Drug Task Force advisory board asked all municipalities to consider an increase in membership fees based upon one dollar for each resident. Commissioners have used Mason’s annual payment, along with other communities, as leverage for State and Federal monies. The Mason’s contribution has been \$22,016 each year from 2004 to present. She said that Warren County’s annual contribution to the Task Force is \$145,000. Approval of Ordinance 2014 – 10, providing for continued participation in the Warren County Drug Task Force, is recommended.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Councilmember Prince, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-10 was made by Councilmember Spaeth, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

ORDINANCE 2014-11 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT, NOT TO EXCEED \$24,000, WITH WARREN COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT FOR THE EDUCATION, INSPECTION AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES NECESSARY TO MEET THE NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION (NPDES) PHASE II REQUIREMENTS

A motion to read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Spaeth. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

Eric Hansen stated that annually, the City has partnered with Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). He said that the City's \$24,000 contribution helps SWCD pay a full time staff member who is available to provide educational outreach and involvement, plan review, and inspection services to assist the City of Mason in meeting Ohio EPA regulations. The State of Ohio provides a proportional match of funds supplied by local government agencies typically up to 75 cents on the dollar. Services provided include construction site inspection, inspection of existing storm water facilities, and direction to homeowners and subdivisions on how best to maintain basins. Eric stated that the 2014 Budget included the City's contribution for this program. Ordinance 2014 – 11 is recommended for adoption.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-11 was made by Councilmember Cox, seconded by Vice Mayor Kidd. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

ORDINANCE 2014-12 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH JACK DOHENY SUPPLIES FOR THE PURCHASE OF ONE (1) IBAK TRUCK MOUNTED CAMERA SYSTEM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$225,316, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

A motion to read by title only was made by Councilmember Pelfrey, seconded by Councilmember Cox. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

Kurt Seiler stated that in 2007 the City purchased a new camera system to video underground utilities that is mounted on a trailer and hauled by an older van. Prior to that, the City was spending up to \$100,000 annually contracting out this work. Kurt explained that the equipment has been extremely useful for both the Engineering & Building and Public Utilities Departments. The camera is used to inspect storm sewers prior to resurfacing streets, to determine the source of water discharging onto properties, and locate sewer blockages for residents. Kurt explained

that the 2014 Budget included \$200,000 for the replacement of this equipment. Staff has evaluated several different manufacturers of this type of equipment. In their evaluation they discovered Jack Doheny Supply has a demo rig with all the necessary equipment, including a vehicle at a large discount making it an attractive option. Kurt stated that staff recommends removal of the trailer and van, with over 160,000 miles, from the fleet and replacing with the demo truck. The 2014 Budget included \$200,000 for the televising equipment and staff recommends the truck be purchased from contingency amounts included in the 2014 Budget for vehicle and equipment replacements. He said that Ordinance 2014 - 12 is recommended for adoption. An emergency clause has been added as this is a demo unit with limited availability at reduced cost.

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Spaeth. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-12 was made by Councilmember Cox, seconded by Vice Mayor Kidd. VOTE: ALL YEAS.

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Cox is recruiting team members for his *Race to Anyplace* team. The team will ride in honor of Ken Murawski. Please contact Councilmember Cox if you would like to join him on March 8th for this event that raises funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Councilmember Cox also announced that a Light Rail System was discussed at a Rail Summit meeting he attended last week in Hamilton County. A system connecting Cincinnati with the suburbs and airport was discussed.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Debbie Speed of 3542 Crooked Tree Drive expressed concerns regarding development of Crooked Tree Golf Course and how the addition of 259 homes on this property might affect current home values, traffic, and water drainage in the area. Debbie expressed her neighborhood's appreciation for the Bethany Road expansion project. She said that they would like to connect their subdivision with the Mason trail. Council discussed current zoning of the golf course property.

Jenna Hurley came forward for Ginny Sundin to announce that Cathy Crotty has been appointed as the newest Park Board member.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND PERSONNEL

A motion to adjourn into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing property acquisition and personnel was made by Councilmember Cox, seconded by Vice Mayor Kidd. VOTE: ALL YEAS. TIME: 8:37 p.m.

A motion to reconvene into Regular Session was made by Councilmember Pelfrey, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: ALL YEAS. TIME: 9:43 p.m.

ORDINANCE 2014-13 AMENDING ORDINANCE 2010-89 ESTABLISHING THE POSITIONS AND RATES OF COMPENSATION FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE MASON MUNICIPAL COURT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

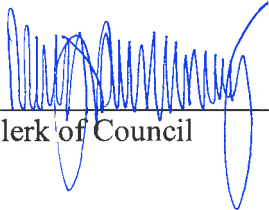
A motion to read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Pelfrey. VOTE: 5 YEAS (Grossmann, Cox not present).

A motion to suspend the rule and allow for adoption after the first reading was made by Vice Mayor Kidd, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: 5 YEAS (Grossmann, Cox not present).

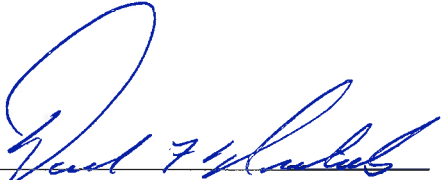
A motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-13 was made by Councilmember Pelfrey, seconded by Councilmember Prince. VOTE: 5 YEAS (Grossmann, Cox not present).

ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Pelfrey, seconded by Councilmember Spaeth. VOTE: ALL YEAS. TIME: 9:45 p.m.



Clerk of Council



Mayor